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THE
APOSTOLIC ORIGIN
OF
EPISCOPACY

ASSERTED,
IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

ADDRESSED

TO THE REV. DR. MILLER,

ONE OF THE PASTORS OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCHES IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

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BELLES LETTRES IN COLUMBIA COLLEGE.

Audi alteram partem.

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APOSTOLIC ORIGIN
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LETTER I.

REV. SIR,

THE *Letters* addressed by you to the *Members of the United Presbyterian Churches* in this city, have, for some time, engaged my most serious attention. Whatever in the judgment of your friends may be their merit, in my humble opinion, they are liable to the charge of great want of fairness in the management of the controversy. You have withholden from your readers numerous testimonies, very pointed and decisive, in favour of Episcopacy;

and you have, in a most striking manner, misrepresented (undesignedly I believe), what you are pleased to call *matters of fact*. Still the whole performance, notwithstanding its defects, is admirably calculated to satisfy those who had rather trust to another, than think and examine for themselves.

In the prosecution of this important controversy, I shall not observe the course which you have taken, but shall nearly reverse it ; beginning with the testimonies usually adduced from the writings of *St. Jerome*.

In order to come at his sentiments, let us see, first, what he has said in favour of the Apostolic institution of Episcopacy.

The first passage that I shall adduce is the following : “ That we may know that the Apostolic traditions were taken from the *Old Testament*, that which *Aaron*, and his *Sons*, and the *Levites* were in the temple, let the *Bishops*, *Presbyters*, and *Deacons* claim to themselves in the church.”* This appears to me to be a very pointed and unequivocal testimony. For what does *Jerome* say ? Does he not say that the *Bishops*, *Presbyters*, and *Deacons* in the *Christian church*, have a right to claim grades similar to those which *Aaron*, his *Sons*, and the *Levites* held in the *Jewish church* ? Had not these officers in the temple service a divine appointment ; and

* Et ut sciamus traditiones apostolicas, &c. Ep. ad Evag.

does not *Jerome* say that what they had, the Christian officers had a right to claim? Does not *Jerome* give it as his opinion, in language that cannot easily be mistaken, that the Apostles made the *Old Testament* their exemplar, and not the *Jewish Synagogue*? Does he not assert, by necessary implication at least, that as there were three orders or grades under the *Mosaic* economy, so there are three orders or grades under the *Christian* economy? And does he not affirm, that this was by apostolical tradition or appointment? Sir, if this be not the meaning of *Jerome's* words, I know not what the meaning of obvious language is. Let us interpret him according to your hypothesis. To the plainest understanding it would appear, that *Jerome* was running a parallel between the officers of the *Christian* and the *Jewish* church. To the plainest understanding it would appear, that *Jerome* places the claims of the *former* as high as those of the *latter*—what the *former* were, let the *latter* claim. But, upon your hypothesis, the *Father* speaks inconsistently. *Aaron* was, by divine appointment, superior to his Sons, the Priests; but the Bishop, according to your interpretation, is not superior to the Presbyter. *Aaron* is officially distinguished by *Jerome* from his Sons, the Priests; but, if you speak the truth, there is no official distinction between the Bishop and the Presbyter; they are precisely the same officer. Is there any parallel here? Let common sense speak.

2. That *Jerome* meant to make Bishops superior to Presbyters by Apostolic appointment, is evident from several other clear and unequivocal passages. He repeats the passage adduced, only leaving out the Levites and the Deacons. "We know that what *Aaron* and his Sons *were*, that the Bishop and Presbyters *are*."*

3. *Jerome*, addressing the church, says, "The Apostles were thy fathers, because that they begat thee. But now that they have left the world, thou hast, in their stead, their Sons, the Bishops."† Here he asserts that the Bishops succeeded to the station of the Apostles, which could not be true, if the Apostles had not devolved their office upon the Bishops. He repeatedly declares that the Bishops succeeded to the Apostolic pre-eminence, and that Bishops,—Bishops in the ecclesiastical sense of the word, such as were in his day, superior to Presbyters,—were set over certain churches by Apostolic authority; as *James* over the church of *Jerusalem*, *Timothy* over the church of *Ephesus*, *Titus* over the church of *Crete*, *Epaphroditus* over the church of *Philippi*, and *Polycarp* over the church of *Smyrna*.‡ Is it possible, without doing violence to language, to interpret these passages in favour of ministerial parity? No, Sir, it is not possible.

* Quod Aaron et filios ejus, hoc Episcopum et Presbyteros esse noverimus. Ep. ad Nepot.

† Fuerunt O Ecclesia! &c. in Psal. xlv.

‡ De Script. Eccles.

The meaning of words, the propriety of language, the drift and design of the writer, all proclaim, with a voice that cannot be silenced, that Episcopacy, in *Jerome's* opinion, was of Apostolical origin.

4. *Jerome* asserts, that "without the Bishop's license, neither Presbyter nor Deacon has a right to baptize."* Perhaps you will say, this was undoubtedly the case in his time; but it was entirely owing to ecclesiastical restriction. This is for ever the subterfuge of our opponents, and never was there a more unworthy subterfuge. No, Sir, if *Jerome* meant so, he spoke very improperly. He should have said, "Without leave from the Bishop, neither Presbyter nor Deacon has the *power* of baptizing, being restrained by the canons of the church; but, from Apostolical authority, they have a *right* to baptize without any dependence upon the Bishop; his supremacy being of mere human institution." If this was *Jerome's* opinion, as you say it was, it is very strange that he has never once explicitly said so; and still stranger, that he should contradict his own repeated assertions.

5. *Jerome* on *Esai*, observes, that "the scriptures give the name of *Princes* to those who should be Bishops of the church. And in his *Catalogue of Christian Writers*, he styles *Polycarp* Prince of *all Asia*; and he asserts that he was made Bishop of *Smirna* by *St. John* himself.

* Sine Episcopi jussione, neque Presbyter, neque Diaconus jus habeant baptizandi. Dial. adv. Lucifer, c. 4.

6. In his 54th epistle, he mentions this difference amongst others, between the *Catholics* and the *Montanist Heretics*: "With us, the Bishops hold the place of the Apostles (that is, the first rank); with them, the Bishop holds the third place." They placed him below a Deacon, and this was one mark of their being heretics; for it was contrary to Apostolic truth and institution. Nothing can be more to the point than this.

7. *Jerome* says, "It is the custom of the church for Bishops to go and invoke the *Holy Spirit* by imposition of hands, on such as were baptized by Presbyters and Deacons, in villages and places remote from the mother church."* "Do you ask," says he, "where this is written? In the *Acts of the Apostles*;" referring to Acts 8 and 19. Here *Jerome* gives it as his opinion, that the authority of the Bishops to administer the rite of *confirmation* is founded on the word of God; consequently, the Episcopal office has a divine warrant. But, upon your hypothesis, the word of God gave authority to an order of ecclesiastics to impose hands in *confirmation*, which neither existed at the time, nor was to exist till three hundred years afterwards, and that by usurpation. Is not this preposterous? It is to no purpose to say, that *Jerome* was mistaken. This would not be disputing like a scholar. We are not trying the *propriety* of *Jerome's* opi-

* Non abnuo hancesse Ecclesiarum consuetudinem, &c. contra Lucifer, c. 4.

nion, but proving what his opinion *was*; and the argument I have proposed, in my judgment, sets the matter in the clearest light.

If I do not deceive myself, it is now fully proved, that *Jerome* believed the Episcopal superiority as it existed in his day, to be of Apostolic institution. Of what consequence, then, is it to adduce three or four passages, in which there is some ambiguity, and, consequently, some obscurity? You very well know, Sir, that it is an established canon of criticism, to explain what is obscure in an author, by what is clear. This is the way you satisfy your own mind, and the minds of your people, when you and they meet with obscure passages in the holy scriptures. And if we do not observe this rule, we shall seldom be free from perplexity in reading any author, either sacred or prophane; for what author is always perspicuous? When an opinion or hypothesis is to be maintained, its advocate I know will be very apt, without an intention of acting unfairly, to lay hold of ambiguous expressions, as they are more flexible to the object he has in view, than those, the sense of which cannot be controverted, without doing violence to language and reason. This is a propensity, against which a man of integrity should most resolutely struggle, and in which, a logical reasoner should never indulge himself. Of your integrity, I have no doubt; but you must permit me sometimes to question, and to controvert your logic.

We are now prepared to notice those passages, which you have quoted from *Jerome* in favour of ministerial parity. I cannot but think, that it would be quite sufficient to refer you to Dr. *Hobart's Apology*, which does, in my opinion, fairly and triumphantly demolish what you are pleased to call *Jerome's* "explicit and decisive testimony." But as it is probable, that these *letters* will be read by some, who have not read the Doctor's very handsome, spirited, and able performance, I think it will be better upon the whole, to take some notice of your quotations, and, at least, to make an attempt to set them in a true point of light.

1. Let it be remembered, that several pointed, express, and unequivocal passages have been adduced to prove, that *Jerome* believed Episcopacy to be an Apostolical institution. If, then, your quotations fairly imply the contrary, it follows unavoidably, that he has contradicted himself; and if so, he deserves no credit from either party.

2. The first passage which I shall notice is the following: "Before there were, by the instigation of the devil, parties in religion, and it was said among the people, *I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas*, the churches were governed by the *common councils of Presbyters*." Now, Sir, when was this language held? Was it not while *St. Paul* was living? Most undoubtedly it was; for we find it in the first epistle to the *Corinthians*. Then it follows, till that period, in *Jerome's* opinion (for it is no more than opinion),

“ the churches were governed by the *common councils of Presbyters.*” But “ afterwards” [after the schism at *Corinth* took place], “ when every one thought that those whom he baptized were rather *his* than *Christ’s*, it was determined throughout the world, that one of the Presbyters should be set above the rest, that the seeds of schism might be taken away.” The question here is, what does *Jerome* mean by the word *afterwards*? Does he mean to date the rise of Episcopacy *immediately*, or *soon after*, the schism broke out at *Corinth*, while the Apostles were living ; or does he mean to defer it for three hundred years, or nearly to that period, as you intimate, till the seeds sown at *Corinth* had produced a plentiful crop in every part of the Christian world ? In the opinion of *Jerome*, Episcopacy was established for the important purpose of checking schism ; yet, when a schism was formed under the very eyes of the Apostles, the best remedy which they could apply to that evil, was not applied. If the absurdity of this does not flash conviction into your mind, that you have totally misconceived and misrepresented *Jerome*, all I have to say is, that *your* mind and *mine* view the matter in a very different point of light. *Blondel* perceived this absurdity, and, to get rid of it, says, *Jerome* speaks *allusively*, and that his words are not to be taken in a strict and proper sense ; and this is your opinion also. But *your* opinion is much less defensible than *his* ; for *he* defers the application of the remedy,

only for the moderate length of a hundred years after the disease began; but *you* defer it for near three hundred. *He* says, Episcopacy took its rise about the year 140; but *you* are better acquainted with the secret of its origin, and do not give it a higher date than the fourth century. "When once, unhappily," says Dr. Campbell, "the controversial spirit has gotten possession of a man, his object is no longer truth, but victory." Of this, the man himself may not be conscious, but be perfectly convinced that he is acting all the while a fair and candid part. His integrity, therefore, should not be called in question.

To avoid the absurdity involved in the supposition, that the remedy was not applied till near three hundred years after the disease made its appearance, although *Jerome* says, that impurity was introduced for the express purpose of checking schism, you say, "that language of the Apostle, *one saith I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, &c.* has been familiarly applied in every age, by way of *allusion* to actual divisions in the church." Well, Sir, what then? Is it your inference, that, therefore, *Jerome* did not date Episcopacy from the time of that schism? That would be a strange inference for a scholar. Nor does *Jerome* speak by way of *allusion*. *Allusion*, if I understand the meaning of the word, is a reference without a direct mention—a hint, an implication. *Jerome* then does not speak allusively; for he asserts in the most

express and indicative manner. *Before* the schism at *Corinth*, there was no difference between Bishop and Presbyter; but after that event took place, it was decreed that one of the Presbyters should be set over the rest, that schism might be checked. This is the amount of what he says. Is this speaking allusively? Does he not assign that event, as the cause which induced the Apostles to alter the original constitution? Who, then, that had no hypothesis to serve, would say that *Jerome* did not mean to date imparity from the schism at *Corinth*, when schism, according to him, was the very cause of that imparity? Surely, such an interpretation would be forced and unnatural. *Jerome* does not speak of schisms subsequent to the Apostolic age, in language used by *St. Paul* with respect to the schism at *Corinth*. He gives no hint of any such schisms, but directly adduces that event to prove the expediency of Episcopacy to check schism; for that was his avowed sentiment. But to say as you do, that Episcopacy was not established till the fourth century, and to quote this passage from *Jerome* as one of your proofs, when he does not give us the slightest hint to that purpose, or that Episcopacy took its rise in any period after the Apostolic age, is really such a *monstrous assumption*, as I should not have expected from a person of your good sense and learning. Zeal is an excellent quality; but then it should always be regulated by candour and knowledge.

Further: you endeavour to establish your point, that *Jerome* did not mean to date Episcopacy from the schism at *Corinth*, from this circumstance, viz. “*Jerome* adduces proof that Bishop and Presbyter were originally the same, from portions of the New Testament, which were certainly written *after* the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*.” This is your strong hold; and, in truth, it is the only objection that has any appearance of strength. But, Sir, from the very dates of the Epistles, in which these portions of scriptures are found, I can prove, if I do not deceive myself, that *Jerome* meant to date Episcopacy from the time of the *Corinthian* schism, or shortly after that event. The Epistles in which the words Bishop and Presbyter are promiscuously used, are those to *Titus*, to *Timothy*, and to the *Philippians*. As to their dates, *Lightfoot* says,* that they were written in the 55th year of Christ—the very same year in which he says the first Epistle to the *Corinthians* was written. If this be correct, your argument is good for nothing. But I acknowledge, that there is a difference of opinion among commentators, with respect to the dates of these epistles. *Hammond* supposes that the first to the *Corinthians* was written in the year 54—to the *Philippians* in 59—to *Timothy* in the same year, and to *Titus* in 55. *Guise* says, that in the opinion of the generality of commentators, the Epistle to *Ti-*

* See *Whitby's* prefaces to the above epistles.

mothy was written between 55 and 58. *Pearson* says, that the first to the *Corinthians* was written in the year 57—to the *Philippians* in 62—to *Timothy* in 65, and to *Titus* in 64. So that the latest of these epistles, if you take the dates of *Pearson*, (and you may if you please) was written but eight years after the schism broke out at *Corinth*. Here then it is evident, that Bishops were placed in these churches soon after the schism at *Corinth*; for *Jerome* expressly declares, that Timothy was made Bishop of *Ephesus*, *Titus* of *Crete*, and *Epaphroditus* of *Philippi*, by *St. Paul*. The very dates then, upon which you place your reliance, turn out to be a proof on our side of the question. But you will say, that *Jerome* reasons from the promiscuous use of Bishop and Presbyter in these epistles, to prove that there was no officer superior to that order; and that, consequently, he could not mean to place the rise of Episcopacy at, or near the time of the schism at *Corinth*; for in that case he would defeat his own view. I answer, that would certainly be the consequence, if his intention was as you say; but I conceive that *Jerome* does not mean to argue from the promiscuous use of Bishop and Presbyter in those epistles, that there was no officer superior to those Presbyters at the time they were written; for he himself had declared that there was; and, consequently, the argument you ascribe to him would make him flatly contradict himself; but if *Jerome* only meant to

prove, as we suppose, that no argument can be founded upon the use of the word Bishop, in favour of Episcopal superiority in the *original* constitution of the church, (for of that only he was speaking) that title being applied to Presbyters even after the government was Episcopal, then he will stand clear of contradiction, and in no other way that I can see, can he be made consistent. It certainly is but fair and candid, after a man has explicitly declared his sentiments, not to lay hold of any loose, ambiguous expressions, and interpret them contrary to his avowed sentiments. It would be an easy matter, in this way, to make almost any writer contradict himself; for there are few who write much; as *Jerome* did, who are always precise and definite.

Upon the whole matter then—here lies your mistake, as I conceive, with respect to the object *Jerome* had in view. You suppose that he meant from the promiscuous use of the words Bishop and Presbyter, to prove that Episcopacy was not introduced into the church, till after the Apostolic age. Had that been his view, we might reasonably expect that he would have said so; but then he would have been one of the most inconsistent of writers. No, Sir; his object was to show that, at first, Episcopacy was not *universally*, nor even *generally* established in the church; but that, for *the most part*, the Apostles left the churches to be governed by a *common council of Presbyters*. I say for *the most part*, or *generally*, but not *universally*; for he himself had

named an instance as an exception—the church of *Jerusalem*. And by thus interpreting him, that the church was *generally*, but not *universally* governed by a *common council of Presbyters*, till schism made its appearance at *Corinth*; and that Episcopacy was introduced *gradually, by little and little*, and by an *Apostolic decree* throughout the world, by which it became *the custom of the church*, we make *Jerome* consistent with himself. It is true, that this will not clear him from arguing inconclusively against the Deacons, who claimed an equality with the Presbyters; for *whenever*, and for *whatsoever purpose* Episcopacy was introduced by the Apostles, it was an Apostolic institution; and, therefore, the Bishop suffered no degree of depression, (which *Jerome* intended he should) nor did the Presbyter receive the least degree of elevation, (which he wished to give him) from such a mode of reasoning. *Jerome* then must stand convicted of inconclusive reasoning; or, if you insist upon your interpretation of his ambiguities, he must stand convicted of inconsistency; and then, his testimony to either party is good for nothing.

By interpreting *Jerome* in the obscure passages as we do, he is made consistent with himself, and with the other Fathers; and we keep entirely clear of doing violence to language. This is the way in which *Stillingfleet*, in his riper years, and more mature judgment, understood him. “As the Apostles, says he, withdrew, they did in some

churches sooner, and in some later" [the true meaning of *Jerome's little and little, and gradually*] "as their own continuance, the condition of the churches, and the qualification of persons were, commit the care and government of churches to such persons whom they appointed thereto. Of which, we have an uncontroulable evidence in the instances of *Timothy* and *Titus*." He then observes, "this is the fairest hypothesis for reconciling the different testimonies of antiquity. For hereby the succession of Bishops is secured from the Apostles times, for which the testimonies of *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *St. Cyprian*, and others, are so plain. Hereby room is left to make good all that *St. Jerome* hath said. So that we may allow for the community of names between Bishop and Presbyter, for *a while* in the church, that is, while the Apostles governed the churches themselves; but *afterwards*, that which was then part of the Apostolical office, became the Episcopal, which hath continued from that time to this by a constant succession in the church."* He then quotes Archbishop *Whitgift*, Bishop *Bilson*, and *Charles I.* Of the last, he justly observes, that "he understood the government of the church as well as any Bishop in *England*. This, I believe, is a correct view of *Jerome's* opinion.

But, Sir, were *Jerome's* opinion really adverse to ours, it should be remembered, that it is no more

* Unreas. of Separ. p. 269, 270.

than opinion; but when he asserts that *St. James* was appointed Bishop of *Jerusalem* by the Apostles, *Timothy* and *Titus* Bishops of *Ephesus* and *Crete* by *St. Paul*, and *Polycarp* Bishop of *Smyrna* by *St. John*, and that the Apostolical succession was brought down uninterrupted to his time, he asserts a fact, supported by the constant tradition of the church, and, in particular, by the history of *Eusebius* and *Heggippus*; so that we may reject, or receive the former, according as his reasoning is strong or weak; but we are not at liberty to reject the latter, unless we can produce much better historical evidence against the fact, than *Jerome* has produced for it. This is a consideration of great weight, and which ought to be duly appreciated.

The next proof, which you adduce from *Jerome* in favour of your hypothesis, will, I apprehend, afford you no support whatever. You say, "*Jerome* further informs us, that the first pre-eminence of Bishops at *Alexandria* was only such as the body of the Presbyters were able to confer. They were only standing *Presidents*, or *Moderators*; and all the ordination they received, on being thus chosen, was performed by the Presbyters themselves. This, he tells us, was the only Episcopacy that existed in the church of *Alexandria*, one of the most conspicuous then in the world, until after the middle of the third century." Now, Sir, this is rather your own fancy, than *Jerome's* testimony. For,

1. *Jerome* does not say that the Bishop of *Alex*

andria was ordained by the Presbyters. He only says, that "he was chosen by them out of their own body." Could *Jerome* have asserted the former consistently with truth, no doubt he would have done it; for that would have been expressly to his purpose, which was, to raise the Presbyter and lower the Bishop.

2. *Jerome* was so far from excluding ordination on that occasion, that, one would suppose from his mentioning it in the next sentence, he meant to include it. "For," even at *Alexandria*, "what does a Bishop, which a Presbyter may not do, excepting ordination?" [By the way, you have left out this sentence in your quotation.] This, you say, was spoken of *Jerome's* own time. But if he had so meant, one would suppose, that he would have expressed himself in such a manner, that he could not have been easily mistaken. And further, *that* could not have been his meaning, for then he would not have spoken the truth. A Bishop in his day, besides the prerogative of ordaining, had that of confirming, of jurisdiction over both clergy and laity, of sitting in general and provincial councils, of consecrating churches, and several other particulars. Still farther—*Jerome* could not have spoken of his own time, because there would be no proper connection between the passage in dispute, and what goes before. Upon our supposition, the sense is as follows. In the early period of the church of *Alexandria*, the Presbyters chose their Bishop out of

their own body. For *then and there*, so important were the Presbyters, that they did every thing which a Bishop did, *ordination excepted*. This preserves propriety, both in the sense, and in the construction. But upon your supposition, there will be neither the one, nor the other. The sense and the construction will be thus. In the early period of the church of *Alexandria*, the Presbyters chose their Bishop out of their own body. "For," *in our time*, "Presbyters can do every thing that a Bishop does, *except ordination*." In the name of grammar and good sense, where is the propriety of the conjunction *for* in the latter sentence? *For*, implies a reason to prove what he had in view, viz. the superiority of a Presbyter over a Deacon. And what was that reason? Why, that a Presbyter could do every thing that a Bishop could, in the church of *Alexandria*, *except ordination*. This was one very good reason for asserting that a Presbyter was superior to a Deacon; for the latter could not do every thing that a Bishop could, *except ordination*. The other proof of the superiority of the Presbyters was, that they elected their Bishop, the Deacons having nothing to do in the business. These were two irrefragable proofs of the superiority of Presbyters, to which the Deacons could make no kind of reply. And thus *St. Jerome* completely gained his point. But, according to your interpretation, there is neither sense, nor grammar in the whole passage.

There is a circumstance which deserves to be noticed, as it affords a strong presumption, that you have entirely mistaken *Jerome* in what he says about the church of *Alexandria*. You know, Sir, that *Origen* and *Clemens* were members of the Presbytery of that church; and as they lived almost 150 years before *Jerome*, they must have been much better acquainted with its history, than he was. Yet, in all that they have said about it, they do not give us the least hint of what you would attach to *Jerome*. This is particularly striking in the case of *Origen*, who bitterly complained of ill treatment from his Bishop *Demetrius*. Could he have told him, that he was his fellow Presbyter, and that he had no more authority than what was implied in collecting the votes of the Presbytery, and maintaining order, it would have been a powerful weapon to wield against him. But *Origen* never intimates any thing of that kind; nor could he with the least consistency; for he declares repeatedly, that Episcopacy is a *divine institution*, as I shall show in its proper place.

But this is not all: I have positive testimony to adduce. Bishop *Pearson*, in his *vindication of the Epistles of Ignatius*, quotes several authors, who particularly mention, that the Bishop of *Alexandria* was always ordained, not by Presbyters, but by a Bishop. *Simeon Metaphrastes* says of *St. Mark*, that "he ordained, as his successor, *Anianus*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, and gave to other churches, Bishops,

Presbyters, and Deacons.”* *Nicephorus Callistus* says,† (speaking of *St. Mark*), that “ he laboured in *Cyrene* and *Pentapolis*, and having founded churches, he gave them Clergy and Bishops, &c. The *Arabian* martyrology of the *Melchites* says, “ he adorned the churches of Christ, constituting for them Bishops and inferior Priests.”‡ *Severus*, in his life of the *Alexandrian* Patriarchs, records, that “ *St. Mark* proceeded to *Pentapolis*, remaining there two years, preaching, and ordaining Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons in all its provinces.” Bishop *Pearson* also observes, that *Rhabanus Maurus*, *Alfrec*, Archbishop of *Canterbury*, *Notkerus*, and *Ordericus Vitalis* give the same account that *Simeon Metaphrastes* does. If you should object to these authors, that they are too late to be absolutely depended upon, I answer, that some of them are not so late as *Eutychius*, upon whose testimony you seem to place great reliance. You cannot, therefore, consistently make that objection. If you say, these authors produce no authorities, I answer, neither do *Jerome* and *Eutychius*. You must, therefore, proceed in some other way, to render nugatory these testimonies. Till then, I shall insist upon their keeping their place.

I am not a little surprised to find you quoting *Eutychius* for your purpose. Had you read *Pearson*, I can hardly think that you would have ven-

* Lib. ii c. 43.

† Lib. ii. c. 43.

‡ Vind. Ep. Ignat.

tured to do it. He proves him to be an author, upon whom not the least dependence can be placed, when the fact did not happen *in*, or *near* his own time. Of this take the following evidence.

1. *Eutychius* was Patriarch of *Alexandria* in the tenth century. I ask then, from whom did he derive his information? From any writers of the first five centuries? Not one of them says, that the Presbyters of *Alexandria* consecrated their Bishop. From the records of the church of *Alexandria*? *Abulfarajus* relates,* that *Amrus Ebnol*, when he took that city, burnt all the books therein. What regard then is due to an author who quotes no authorities, and lived too late to know any thing of the origin of the church of *Alexandria*, but what is to be derived from the primitive writers?

2. *Eutychius* appears to have been very little conversant with the church of *Alexandria*, in the early ages. In some well known particulars, he contradicts the best writers of antiquity. He says† *St. Mark* came to *Alexandria* in the ninth year of *Claudius*, and suffered martyrdom in the first year of *Nero*; and that under the government of *Nero*, *St. Peter* dictated to *St. Mark*, in the city of *Rome*, the *Gospel* which goes under the name of the latter. This contradicts *Eusebius*, who says,‡ that *Mark* died in the eighth year of *Nero*. *Eutychius*, in this particular, contradicts himself also; for he says,

* Pearson's Vind. p. 326, 327. † Eccel. Hist. Chap. ii.

‡ Pearson's Vind. p. 326, 327

that *St. Peter* was put to death in the twenty-second year after our *Lord's* passion; that is, *before* the government of *Nero*. Nor do any of the *ancients* say, that *St. Mark* did not write his *gospel*, till his return from *Alexandria* to *Rome*, or that he ever *did* return. On the contrary, it appears from *Eusebius*,* that he wrote his *gospel* before he went into *Egypt*.

3. *Eutychius's* ignorance of the church of *Alexandria* in the primitive times, will appear from what he says concerning *Origen*, the most noted man of the age in which he lived. *Eutychius* says,† “in the time of the Emperor *Justinian*, there was one *Origen*, Bishop of the *Mangabenses*, who asserted the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and denied the resurrection—that *Justinian* sent for *Origen* to *Constantinople*, and that *Eutychius*, the Bishop of that city, excommunicated him.” Almost every syllable of this is false. *Origen* never was a Bishop, and he lived in the second and third centuries, but *Justinian* lived in the fifth and sixth. *Eutychius* also relates, that three Bishops were excommunicated at the same time with *Origen*—*Iba*, Bishop of *Roha*—*Thaddeus*, Bishop of *Massininsa*, and *Theodoret*, Bishop of *Ancyra*; but these Bishops were dead before the time of *Justinian*.—Once more. Speaking of *Demetrius*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, (whose Presbyter *Origen* was, and who was the Bishop that excommunicated him)

* Pearson's Vind. p. 326, 327.

† Ibid. p. 327.

Eutychius says, *Demetrius* the *Alexandrian* patriarch,* wrote to *Gabius*, Bishop of *Jerusalem*, and *Maximus*, Patriarch of *Antioch*, concerning the reason of the Paschal feast. And he says, that *Gabius* was created Bishop of *Jerusalem* in the seventeenth year of the Emperor *Aurelius*, and sat only three years. This epistle, then, of which he speaks, must have been written, either at the closing period of *Aurelius's* government, or at the beginning of the reign of *Commodus*. But at these periods, *Demetrius* was not Bishop of *Alexandria*, but *Julian*; nor *Victor* Bishop of *Rome*, but *Eleutherus*. Further—when epistles were sent by the eastern church to *Victor*, Bishop of *Rome*, concerning the Paschal feast, *Narcissus*, not *Gaianus* (whom *Eutychius* miscalls *Gabius*), was Bishop of *Jerusalem*; and between *Gaianus* and *Narcissus* there were nine Bishops. Neither is there any mention in all antiquity, of *Demetrius* having written to *Victor*, concerning the time of keeping Easter. The Bishops of *Palestine*, in their synodical epistle, only say, that the *Alexandrians* agree with them; but they make no mention of *Demetrius*.

I think, Sir, that I have now given abundant proof, that *Eutychius* is not entitled to the least degree of credit, for any thing he asserts concerning the primitive church.

* The title of patriarch was not in use in the church till the time of Leo I and the Ephesine and Chalcedon councils. Cave's Church Gov. p. 157.

Let us now sum up all that has been said upon the subject of *Jerome's* testimonies.

1. *Jerome* has given repeated, positive, unequivocal testimonies to the Apostolic origin of Episcopacy.

2. It cannot be supposed that he intended to prove, that Episcopacy was not of Apostolic origin; for then he would have contradicted himself, which should never be set to any man's account, unless his words are so clear and decisive, that it is impossible to avoid it. But that is not the case with *Jerome's little and little, and decreed throughout the world, and custom of the churches*; for it appears from the *holy scriptures*, and from the writings of antiquity, (as will be fully evinced in the course of this controversy) that the Apostles, as the churches became too numerous for their care, placed over them Bishops in the ecclesiastical sense of the word. When, therefore, *Jerome* says, that the churches were governed at first by a *common council of Presbyters*, he must be understood to mean *generally*, but not *universally*; otherwise he would have directly contradicted himself, as he had said, that *St. James* was constituted Bishop of *Jerusalem* by the hands of the Apostles. By this easy, and in no respect improper interpretation of the above vague expressions, *Jerome* is preserved from palpable contradiction.

3. It has been proved from the dates of the *Epistles to Timothy, to Titus, and to the Philippians*, that

Jerome did not intend to place the rise of Episcopacy after the Apostolic age ; for even from *Pearson's* dates, which are later than those of other commentators, it is evident, that several Bishops, very soon after the schism at *Corinth*, were placed at the head of certain churches, as *St. James* had been, previously to that event, over the church of *Jerusalem*. To these appointments, *Jerome* himself bears the most positive testimony. Your interpretation is therefore contrary to matter of fact, and also sets him at variance with himself.

4. When *Jerome*, in his commentary on the Epistle to *Titus*, and in his Epistle to *Evagrius*, shows from the Scriptures, that the words Bishop and Presbyter are different titles given to the same officer, he cannot mean, that there was no officer superior to that order ; for he repeatedly asserts, that the Apostles held the first rank in the church, and that *St. James* was the fixed Bishop of *Jerusalem*. *Jerome* then could only mean to assert, that no argument could be founded upon the use of the word Bishop in favour of Episcopal pre-eminence, in the *original* constitution of the church ; for even after Episcopacy was established, in consequence of the schism at *Corinth*, the words Bishop and Presbyter were indifferently applied to the same order. *Jerome* evidently intended to lower the Bishop, and raise the Presbyter ; it matters not from what motive. This he endeavours to do by asserting that, at first, the churches were not *generally*

governed by fixed Bishops, but by a *common council of Presbyters*, and that the change took place in consequence of the schism at *Corinth*. All this, to be sure, is very inconclusive reasoning; nay, very weak if you please; for *whenever*, or, for *whatever* purpose Episcopacy was instituted by the Apostles, it was an Apostolic institution. Confine *Jerome's* meaning to this simple assertion, that the churches were generally, before the schism at *Corinth*, governed by the *common council of Presbyters*, subject however in the last resort to the jurisdiction of the Apostles, and you preserve him from inconsistency; but if you extend his meaning beyond the lives of the Apostles, you make him inconsistent; and consequently, he is no authority on either side of the question.

5. *Jerome* does not say, that the Bishop elected by the Presbyters at *Alexandria*, was not ordained; or that he was ordained by the Presbyters; and, therefore, no one has a right to assert either for him. Nay, it appears from *Jerome's* Epistle to *Evagrius*, that he was particularly careful to exclude Presbyters from ordaining; and it has been shown, that if you confine his meaning to his own time, you make the whole passage inconsistent with good sense, and good grammar.

And, lastly—*Eutychius*, who lived in the tenth century, and quotes no authorities for his assertion, that the Presbyters ordained their Bishop, is an author entitled to no credit in matters which hap-

pened so long before his time, and that he contradicts authors as early, and some of them earlier than himself, and who have a much better claim to confidence.

I shall now conclude all I have to say on the subject of *Jerome's* testimonies, in the strong language of Doctor *Hobart*.—"Had the opinion of *Jerome* been direct and positive, had he asserted in the most explicit terms that Episcopacy was a *human invention*, no candid Presbyterian should urge his testimony. He lived at too distant a period from the Apostolic age. He was biassed by personal feelings and prejudices. It is incredible that so important and extraordinary a change as that from Presbytery to Episcopacy, should have universally taken place in the church, without the most full and positive testimony concerning it. It would not have been left to the *single* testimony of a Father, who wrote at the close of the fourth century.

"The opponents of Episcopacy gain nothing by relying on *Jerome*. They lose much. They admit the weakness of their cause, by resting on the judgment of a Father who lived so late as the fourth century, and who cannot be considered as a *credible witness*, or an *impartial reasoner*," even if his judgment was, upon a fair and candid investigation, in their favour. "They admit that long before his time, (for he gives not the most distant hint of its being a recent event) the supremacy of Bishops was established. They concede to Episcopacy the

venerable sanction of primitive and universal usage. They bring on themselves the burden of proving how Episcopacy could have universally prevailed within a few years of the Apostolic age, if it had not been sanctioned by Apostolic authority. But, most mortifying circumstance, they cast a blot as foul as midnight on their darling Presbytery; they pass the highest encomium on this hated Prelacy. In relying on *Jerome*, they admit, that Presbytery proved incompetent to preserving the unity of the church; that so lamentable were its defects and inconveniences, that the primitive Christians were obliged to throw it off, and to seek repose for their distracted church, so long tossed on the tempestuous billows of Presbytery, in the peaceful haven of Episcopacy. Yes—as Dr. *Maurice* shrewdly and keenly remarks,* if the Presbyterian parity had any place in the primitive times, as some do imagine, it must needs have been an *intolerable kind of government*, since all on a sudden it was universally abolished. It must have given strange occasion of offence, when all the Christian churches in the world should conspire to abrogate this polity, and *to destroy all the memory and footsteps of it.*”

* Vindication of the Government of the Primitive Church, in answer to Baxter, p. 363, 369.

LETTER II.

REV. SIR,

THE next author whom you bring to your aid is *Hilary*, the Roman Deacon, who is generally supposed to be the commentator under the name of *Ambrose*. You quote his Commentary on Ephes. iv. 2. “After that churches were planted in all places, and officers ordained, matters were settled *otherwise than they were in the beginning.*” That might very well be, and yet nothing essential in the church have been altered. Points of expediency must necessarily be regulated by circumstances, and it is a *puritanical* notion to maintain the contrary. But *Hilary* does not say, that there was any difference made in the ecclesiastical orders; that is, that out of two, three were made. He gives no hint of that sort. You go on: “Hence it is, that the Apostles’ writings *do not in all things agree to the present constitution of the church*; because they were written under the first rise of the church.” As for instance, he might have said,—We have now no Deaconesses, no love feasts, no kiss of charity, no community of goods. And we have some customs which did not exist at first.

Our baptized appear in white garments, which are emblematical of innocence; our clergy wear robes of distinction; our churches are grand and highly ornamented; and several other things which might be mentioned.—But, Sir, what has all this to do with the essential orders of the ministry? Nothing at all. *Hilary* proceeds,—“For he [the Apostle] calls *Timothy*, who was created a *Presbyter* by him, a *Bishop*, for so at first the *Presbyters* were called, among whom this was the course of governing churches, that as one withdrew another took his place.” And do not all Episcopalians acknowledge this community of names? Do we hesitate to acknowledge it? You know that we do not? If you could prove, that there was no order in the church superior to that of *Presbyters* or *Bishops*, you would then do something for your cause; but this neither has, nor can be proved. *Hilary* seems to intimate, (yet very obscurely) that when the *Bishop* died, the next in order took his place. Of that, there is not the least hint in the scriptures, nor in any ancient writer, so far as I know. *Jerome* directly contradicts that notion with respect to the church of *Alexandria*; and I commit myself to prove, when called upon, that it is totally groundless. But now comes the fatal blow to the cause of *Episcopacy*. “In *Egypt*, even at this day, the *Presbyters* ordain in the *Bishop*’s absence.” Here, Sir, you should have quoted the Latin, and then those who are acquainted with that language, would not so easily be

led into an error. The Latin is *consignant*. This word is generally used, metonymically, for baptism, or confirmation; because, in these rites, the person baptized or confirmed, was anointed in the form of a cross. Some have supposed (Bishop *Taylor* for one) that the passage is corrupted, and that the word ought to be *consecrant*. The Bishop also observes, as a further ground of suspicion, that *St. Austin*, speaking of the dignity of Presbyters, says,—*In Alexandria, et per totum Egyptum si desit Episcopus, consecrat Presbyter*; that is, consecrates the Eucharist; but never in the Bishop's presence. But let this emendation be correct or not, it is certain that you have very unwarrantably translated *consignant* by the word *ordain*.

By consulting *Suicer's Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus*, I find that my assertion, with respect to *consigno*, which answers to the Greek word $\Sigma\phi\alpha\rho\iota\zeta\omega$, is correct. It was generally used to signify baptism or confirmation, most commonly baptism. But *Suicer* quotes a passage from *Dionysius*, the *Areopagite*, from which it appears, that in his day, the sign of the cross was sometimes used at ordination. It is, I believe, universally acknowledged by the *learned*, that the writings ascribed to *Dionysius*, the *Areopagite*, were the production of another *Dionysius*, who lived in the fourth century, according to *Pearson* and *Hammond*, or according to *Daille* in the fifth. But this is of no consequence. The Latin translation is as follows; the Greek you will find in

Suicer, vol. i. p. 1198, 1199. *Unicuique autem eorum signum crucis a consecrante Episcopo imprimitur.* “But upon every one of those [ordained] the sign of the cross is impressed by the consecrating Bishop.” Now, Sir, I appeal to your ingenuousness, whether a solitary instance, (or if you please, a few instances) in which the Greek and Latin words signify metonymically, *ordain*, will authorize you to translate *consignant* as you have done, when you must certainly know, that the word used by the Latins, generally, if not universally, is *ordino*? *Hammond* observes,* that *Blondel* and *Salmasius*, with all their diligence, were not able to produce a single instance, in which, *consigno* signifies *ordain*. Perhaps you will say, that the sense of *consigno* must be determined by the subject on which the author was treating, and that *Ambrose*, in the passage quoted, seems to be speaking of *ordination*. I answer, no—he is not speaking of *ordination*. His words are, *Scripta Apostoli non per omnia conveniunt ordinationi, quæ nunc in Ecclesia est.* “The writings of the Apostle do not, in all things, agree to the *order* which is now in the church.” He then mentions one exception to the Apostolic *order*, viz. “In the church of *Alexandria*, when the Bishop is absent, the Presbyters *consign*,” that is, if you will insist upon the word *consignant*, *confirm*; but it is much more probable that the word ought to be

* *Hammond*, vol. ii. p. 62.

consecrant, because we have no other testimony, that in *Egypt*, a Presbyter confirmed when the Bishop was absent; and it is surprising to me, Sir, that when *Blondel* and *Salmasius*, as quoted by Dr. *Hammond*,* are so uncertain upon this point, that you should speak in such a positive, decisive manner. *Salmasius* concedes, that *consignant* in the one author should be interpreted by *consecrant* in the other; and *Blondel* acknowledges, that the former word may signify either *confirmation*, *ordination*, or the *benediction of penitents*.

But, Sir, were I to admit your interpretation, it would directly militate against your cause. For, as *Ambrose* says (according to your sense of the word), that Presbyters ordain at *Alexandria* in the absence of the Bishop, and mentions this as one instance in proof of his assertion, that the order of the church was not in his day as in the time of *St. Paul*, it follows, that ordination by Presbyters at *Alexandria*, when the Bishop was absent, was a novelty, and contrary to Apostolic practice; and, therefore, a most wretched support to Presbyterian ordination.

It is, Sir, a circumstance that ought to excite in the minds of your intelligent readers, a pretty strong suspicion that all is not right, when they see you quoting passages which, when fairly interpreted, make nothing for your purpose, and omitting to

* *Hammond*, vol. ii. p. 62, chap. 8.

produce quotations from the same authors, which unequivocally establish the Apostolic institution of Episcopacy. Thus, you do not exhibit the following pointed testimonies from *Hilary*. “The Bishop is the chief; though every Bishop is a Presbyter, yet every Presbyter is not a Bishop.* He declares that *James* was constituted Bishop of *Jerusalem* by the Apostles, and that the Apostles were Bishops.”† He affirms, that “*Timothy* and *Titus*, and the Angels of the *Asiatic* churches were Bishops”‡—Bishops in the appropriate sense of the word. He says, “In the Bishop all orders are contained, because he is the *Prince*, or *Chief* of the Priests.¶ He affirms that “the Bishop is the *Viceregent* of Christ, and represents his *Person*,” and that “he decreed every church should be governed by one Bishop, even as all things proceed from one God the Father.” And in several other places this author affirms, “that in a church there were several Presbyters and Deacons, but never more than one Bishop, even in the Apostles’ times.” He also says, that the *Angels* in the *Revelations*

* Sed Episcopus primus est; ut omnis Episcopus Presbyter sit, non tamen omnis Presbyter Episcopus. Com. 1 Tim. iii.

† Jacobum vidit hierosolymæ quia illic erat constitutus ab Apostolis Episcopus. Com. Gal. i. 19. Caput in Ecclesia Apostolorum posuit—ipsi sunt Episcopi. Com. 1 Cor. xii. 28.

‡ Hunc jam creatum Episcopum instruit per Epistolam. Præfat in Ep. i. ad Tim. Titum Apostolus consecravit Episcopum. Præfat in Ep. ad Tit. Angelos Episcopos dicit sicut docetur in Apocalypsi Johannis. Com. 1 Cor. xi. 10.

¶ In Episcopo omnes ordines sunt, quia primus Sacerdos est, hoc est Princeps Sacerdotum, &c. Com. in Ephes. iv. 11.

were Bishops. Yet, this is one of the authors favourable to your cause. See Archbishop *Potter*, p. 175.

The next testimony you produce, is from *Chrysostom*, Bishop of *Constantinople*. "The Apostles," says he, "having discoursed concerning the Bishops—omitting the order of Presbyters, descends to the Deacons; and why so, but because between Bishop and Presbyter there is scarcely any difference; and to them is committed both the *instruction* and the *presidency* of the church; and whatever he said of Bishops agrees also to Presbyters. In *ordination alone*, they have gone beyond the Presbyters." Now, Sir, this last is the grand prerogative of the Bishop—that which places him at the head of the church; for in every government, both civil and ecclesiastical, he from whom all commissions flow, must necessarily be the chief ruler. The Presbyters *instruct* as well as the Bishops—they *preside* over their particular congregations, as the Bishops do over their particular dioceses; *presidency* therefore belongs to both; but as to *ordination*, that belongs not to Presbyters—therein the Bishops excel.

I really, Sir, was amazed when I found this passage quoted in favour of ministerial parity. It is one of those many *strange things* that will appear in the course of this controversy. How to account for it upon any rational ground, is indeed beyond my capacity.

But, Sir, as usual, all the testimonies of *Chrysos-*

tom are not produced ; for a very 'good reason I presume—because they do not much help the cause of parity.

The eloquent Bishop of *Constantinople* observes, (Com. Ep. Philip.) “ *Paul* saith in his Epistle to *Timothy*, fulfil thy ministry ; being then a Bishop ; for that he was a Bishop” (in the appropriate sense) “ appears by *Paul*’s writing thus unto him, *lay hands suddenly on no man.*” This is the very act, in which, the Bishops principally excel the Presbyters ; by which the *former* are in a peculiar manner distinguished, and which the *Father* quotes to prove their superiority over Presbyters. Again—In his thirteenth Homily on 1 Tim. iv. 4—with the *laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*, he has these pointed and decisive words : “ He (*Paul*) does not speak of Presbyters, but of Bishops. For Presbyters did not ordain *Timothy* a Bishop.” All the art of man cannot evade this testimony, for it implies, 1. That Bishops, as an order superior to Presbyters, existed in the Apostolic age ; 2. That *Timothy* was one of those Bishops ; and, 3. That Presbyters could not in that age, as well as in the age in which *Chrysostom* lived, ordain a Bishop. Need I quote any more from this author ? I certainly need not. I shall but just mention his opinion of the Presbyters, or Bishops convened by *St. Paul* at *Miletus*. He supposes several of them to be Bishops in the appropriate sense of the word ; but this I candidly acknowledge, does not admit of

any satisfactory proof. It however shows, that this *Father* believed Episcopacy was an Apostolic, and divine institution. I would also refer you to what he says upon Acts viii. on the subject of confirmation. He places that rite intirely in the hands of the Bishops, in virtue of their being the *successors* of the Apostles; and, consequently, the Episcopal office is of divine origin.

Your next friend to *parity* is the celebrated *Theodoret*, Bishop of *Cyprus*; an eloquent, copious, and learned writer, says *Mosheim*. Your quoting this high churchman, as Presbyterians have always considered him, is another of your *strange things*; but, Sir, I do not dislike your spirit, whatever I may think of your prudence. When a man attempts great things, the greater the better; for then, if he do not reach his point, he falls nobly. Your undertaking from first to last is arduous, and in some of your quotations, you are perfectly romantic. But it may be said of you, if it will afford you any comfort, as it was of a daring adventurer of old—

—*magnis tamen excidit ausis.*

Your quotation from *Theodoret* is as follows. “The Apostles call a Presbyter a Bishop, as we showed when we expounded the Epistle to the *Philippians*, and which may be also learned from this place; for after the precepts proper to Bishops, he describes the things which belong to Deacons. But as I said, of old they called the same men both

Bishops and Presbyters." Now, Sir, to every word of this quotation I can heartily subscribe ; yet I do not think, that you will be much disposed to place me among the advocates of parity. *Theodoret* admits, what almost all Episcopalians admit, that for some time there was a community of names ; but this was while the Apostles governed the church, which prevented any inconvenience from the promiscuous use of titles. The inference, therefore, that you would have your readers draw from the above quotation, is as gross a fallacy as ever was committed to paper ; and it is an inference directly contrary to the opinion of *Theodoret*. Why, Sir, did you not inform your *Christian brethren* that *Theodoret* maintains, that those who had the appropriate title of Bishop in his day, and for ages before, were called *Apostles* in the first age of the church ? Why did you not lay before them the following passage ? "*Epaphroditus* was called the Apostle of the *Philippians*, because he was entrusted with the Episcopal government, as being their Bishop. For those now called Bishops, were anciently called Apostles ; but in process of time, the name of Apostle was left to those who were truly Apostles, and the name of Bishop was restrained to those who were anciently called Apostles : Thus, *Epaphroditus* was the Apostle of the *Philippians*, *Titus* of the *Cretans*, and *Timothy* of the *Asiatics*." This was exactly the opinion of *Jerome*, and of *Hilary* the Deacon, as we have

already seen; and nothing can be more definite and explicit.

Your next quotations are from *Primasius* and *Sedulius*, two writers of the same century; but their testimonies are not at all to your purpose; for they go no farther than to assert the community of names, to which Episcopalians readily subscribe.

After quoting these authors, you make an attempt to invalidate the argument drawn from *Aërius*' condemnation, on account of his asserting a community of titles in the Apostolic age, and inferring from it, that there should be a parity of officers in the church. For this, *Aërius* was universally condemned, and branded with the title of heretic. *Epiphanius* calls him a *madman*. But you inform us, that *Epiphanius* is a writer of no credit, and you quote *Mosheim* in support of your opinion. Now, if you mean by *no credit*, that he was not a man of great talents, and an accurate, fine writer, I believe you are right; but, if you mean that he was not a man of integrity and veracity, you have no ground for that opinion. The character which *Socrates*, the ecclesiastical historian, gives of him, does not accord with yours and *Mosheim*'s. He says, "he lived a great while in *Egypt*, where his eminent skill and practice in the evangelical philosophy rendered him very famous; as it did in *Palestine*, and in the isle of *Cyprus*, of which he became Metropolitan, and from thence, as from a centre, diffused the lustre of his merit

and significancy, in the conduct of civil as well as spiritual affairs, throughout the world.* But let his talents and learning be great or small, I think he must have had sense enough to know, that his contemporary *Aërius*, who was a semi-Arian, and the founder of a new sect, after he was disappointed of a Bishopric, taught erroneous doctrines, of which *this* relating to Episcopacy was one, and that he was generally condemned by the Christian church. Had *Aërius* asserted only a community of names in the Apostolic age, he would never have been blamed for *that* by *Epiphanius*; for that was the general opinion; but when he inferred a *parity* in the church from that circumstance, he was universally condemned for it, and pronounced a heretic. It was not because (as you say) “he set himself against the actual constitution of the churches in his day,” that he was deemed a heretic; for no man was ever so deemed for violating the canons of the church, upon which, according to your hypothesis, that constitution rested; but because, in the opinion of *Epiphanius*, and the generality of Christians in that age, *Aërius*’ notion of church government would essentially alter the church of Christ. “The order of Bishops,” says *Epiphanius*, “begets fathers to the church of God; but the order of Presbyters begets sons in baptism, but not fathers by ordination.”† Such was the catholic

* See Parker’s Abridg. of Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret, p. 412.

† Her. 75.

doctrine which *Aërius* opposed, and which you are at this day opposing.

But, Sir, were I to admit your objection against *Epiphanius*, I do not see what service it would render your cause, while *St. Augustin* stands in your way. I think you must know, that *he** gives the same account of *Aërius*, that *Epiphanius* does; and I do not think that you will venture to assert, that *Augustin* deserves no credit. If it be your humour to admit no testimony in this controversy, unless it come from men of great talents and extensive learning, I make no objection, however absurd the notion may be. To this ordeal then I present *St. Augustin*. What says *Mosheim* of him? “The fame of *Augustin*, Bishop of *Hippo*, in *Africa*, filled the whole Christian world; and not without reason, as a variety of great and shining qualities were united in the character of that illustrious man. A sublime genius, an uninterrupted and zealous pursuit of truth, an indefatigable application, an invincible patience, a sincere piety, and a subtle and lively wit, conspired to establish his fame upon the most lasting foundations.”† Bishop *Taylor* mentions another author of that age, who bears the same testimony—*Philastrinus*; but of him I can say nothing.

I do not see then, but that we are entitled to our argument drawn from the condemnation of *Aërius*’

* Taylor, Epis. p. 150. † Eccles. Hist. vol. i. p. 362.

opinions, one of which was, that Bishop and Presbyter are not, by Apostolic institution, different orders in the church; and most assuredly, had you lived in that day, and published your *Letters* to your *Christian brethren*, your name would have been handed down to posterity, by a sentence of condemnation passed upon that performance: for *Chrysostom's* opinion was, beyond all controversy, the universal opinion of that age, that *ordination* is the proper and peculiar function of a Bishop, which, principally, gives him his superiority over a Presbyter.

Before I take notice of what you have said, in answer to the testimonies adduced from *Eusebius*, I have some quotations to make in favour of Episcopacy, which I think will clearly show, that all you have said with respect to this author, is mere cavil.

Athanasius, you know, was contemporary with *Eusebius*, and sat with him in the famous council of *Nice*. He was the great champion of the Trinitarian cause; and was, in every respect, a great and excellent man. Now, what does this illustrious Bishop say with respect to Episcopacy? You certainly ought to have told your readers, after so much profession of fairness and candour. But this defect I shall supply. Let us attend to his epistle to *Dracontius*. This Presbyter was elected to a Bishopric, but declined the office. Upon which *Athanasius* writes thus to him: "But if you think

there is no reward allotted to the office of a Bishop, you despise the *Saviour* who instituted that office. I beseech you suffer nothing of that kind to enter your mind—For what the Lord instituted by his Apostles, that is good, and remains firmly established,” &c.* Here *Athanasius* declares Episcopacy, as it was in his days, to be *Christ’s* institution by his Apostles. This is a very weighty testimony against you.

There is another writer who was contemporary with *Theodoret*, that deserves to be noticed—I mean *Isidore*, Bishop of *Pelusium*, of whom *Mosheim* gives the following character. “He was a man of uncommon learning and sanctity. A great number of his epistles are yet extant, and discover more piety, genius, erudition and wisdom, than are to be found in the voluminous productions of many other writers.” *Isidore* says, “The Bishops succeeded the Apostles—they were constituted through the whole world in the place of the Apostles.” He then says, that “*Aaron*, the high priest, *was* what a Bishop *is*, and that “*Aaron’s* sons prefigured the Presbyters.” This appears to be in perfect coincidence with the opinion of *St. Jerome*, who lived at the same time. They speak in nearly the same terms, and cannot be understood in any

* Quid si nullam omnino mercedem Episcopi functioni destinatum arbitraris; servatoremque, qui eam ita instituit, contemnis, &c. Namquæ Dominus per Apostolos instituit, ea et bona sunt, et firma persistunt, &c. Ep. ad Dracon.

other manner, than what is strongly in favour of Episcopacy.*

In this century lived *Optatus*, a Numidian Bishop, who says, that “the Laity, the Ministers, the Deacons, the Presbyters, nay, the Bishops themselves, the *princes and chief* of all, proved traditors.” “There are,” says he, “four sorts in the church, Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons, and the faithful Laity”—that is, these are the constituent parts of a Christian church. See *Taylor’s Epis.* p. 95.

To these individual testimonies, let us add those of several councils, both provincial and general, by which we shall see, what was the opinion of the whole Christian world upon this subject.

In the year 265, a council convened at *Antioch*, to try *Paul*, Bishop of *Samosata*. The Fathers of that council declare, (as related by *Eusebius*, lib. vii.) that “the office of a Bishop is sacred and exemplary, both to the clergy and to the people.” Now, if it be sacred, it certainly must be agreeable to the will of *Christ*. But, upon your hypothesis, it has no warrant from the word of God—it is an usurpation, and consequently an anti-Christian office, as you and your brethren very graciously represent it.

* I am indebted for this testimony to a book, entitled “A brief Account of Ancient Church Government, by an anonymous author. The Latin of the above quotations is as follows. “*Apostolis decedentibus successerunt Episcopi qui sunt constituti per totum mundum in sedibus Apostolorum?*” Again—“*Quo toto contemplari oportet, Aaron summum sacerdotem, id est, Episcopum fuisse; filios ejus Presbyterorum figuram præmonstrasse*, lib. ii. ch. 5.

This council, then, consisting of seventy or eighty Bishops,* living but about a century and a half from the Apostolic age, at a time when the church was pure in her doctrine, and strict in her discipline; when the clergy were purified by sufferings, and kept alive to their duty, by death being constantly presented to their view in the most horrible forms; at this time, and under these circumstances, this council, bearing testimony to the divine origin of Episcopacy, is to weigh less with us, than the opinion of a small part of the Christian world, for two hundred years past. He that can appreciate *testimony* in this manner, appears to me to have a way of thinking, of which, the small portion of philosophy I am master of, will not enable me to give any tolerable account.

The council of *Laodicea*, which met some time in the fourth century, after specifying particular instances of subordination to the Bishop, sums them up thus: "So likewise the Presbyters, let them do nothing without the precept and counsel of the Bishop."† This is exactly the language of *Ignatius*; no ministrations in the church were admitted without the Bishop's authority; of course, he was the head of the clergy, and sacred orders were derived only from him. The council of *Arles*, which was held before that of *Nice*, commands the

* So says Athanasius; so says Hilary. See Valesius' note on Euseb. Ecc. Hist. lib. vii. p. 350.

† Can. 56.

same thing.* So likewise the thirteenth canon of the council of *Ancyra*, according to the Latin of *Isidore*.† And all this exactly coincides with *Jerome's* advice—"Be subject to thy Bishop, and receive him as the Father of thy soul."‡ Strange advice, if *Jerome* did not think Episcopacy was founded upon the word of God.

There were three remarkable facts which occurred; two of them in the fourth century, the other in the beginning of the fifth. The latter case was thus: *Musæus*, and *Eutychianus*, who were only Presbyters, took upon them to ordain; but the council of *Sardis* would not admit them into the order of clergy: They would admit none "but such as were ordained by Bishops, who were so in truth—for they were no Bishops that imposed hands on them."|| This shows clearly, what the council of *Sardis* thought of Presbyterian ordination. It was declared by them to have no validity, because the ordainers had no authority to impose hands.

One of the other two cases was that of *Ischiras*, who was ordained a Presbyter by *Colluthus*, who was himself no more than a Presbyter. *Ischiras* was reduced to lay-communion by the synod of

* Ut Presbyteri sine conscientia Episcoporum nihil faciant.

† "Sed nec Presbyteris civitatis sine Episcopi precepto amplius aliquid imperare, vel sine autoritate literarum ejus in unaquaque parochia aliquid agere." Can. 19. See *Taylor* on Epis. p. 114.

‡ Ep. ad. Nepot.

|| Can. 19.

Alexandria, because he was not ordained by a Bishop. Perhaps you will say, that was done, because it was contrary to the canons, which had appropriated ordination to the Episcopal office. But that evasion will be of no manner of service to you; for, happily, we have a full account of the matter in the synodical epistle of the Bishops of *Egypt, Thebais, Lybia* and *Pentapolis*, and in the joint letter of the clergy of the province of *Mareotis*, both preserved in the works of *Athanasius*. These Bishops say expressly, that the ordination was null, *because it was performed by a Presbyter*. “How came *Ischiras*,” say they, “to be a Presbyter, and by whom was he ordained? Was it by *Colluthus*? But *Colluthus* died a Presbyter, so that all the impositions of his hands were invalid and null.” The clergy of *Mareotis* likewise say, “*Ischiras*, who calls himself a Presbyter, is not a Presbyter, since he was ordained by *Colluthus*, who assumed an imaginary Episcopacy, and was afterwards commanded by *Hosius* and other Bishops synodically assembled, to return to the order of Presbyters, whereto he was ordained. And, consequently, all those whom *Colluthus* ordained, returned to their former stations, and *Ischiras* himself became a layman.” Here is not a word said about a violation of the canons of the church; that would have made the ordination of *Ischiras* *uncanonical*, but not *invalid*. His ordination was not admitted, because it was performed by a Presbyter, and a Presbyter had not the power

of ordaining; consequently, there must be a higher officer in the church, to whom ordination belongs, and that officer can be no other than the Bishop. This is an excellent comment upon *Jerome's* assertion—*Quid enim facit Episcopus, quod etiam Presbyteri non faciant, excepta ordinatione?* “What does a Bishop do, which a Presbyter may not, excepting ordination?” In the opinion of all the writers and councils of the fourth century, no Presbyter, from the original restriction of his office, could ordain: We may, therefore, very reasonably suppose, that *Jerome* meant to comprehend within his observation, the power of a Presbyter in the Apostolic age.

The third case is that of *Maximus*, who was another imaginary Bishop. All his ordinations were pronounced null by the council of *Constantinople*.—*Taylor* on Epis. p. 103.

When the canons of the church were transgressed by clergymen, they were either deposed, or suspended from the execution of their office, but still their *character* remained; but if they performed any clerical act, although it was deemed irregular and contumacious, yet it was not deemed invalid, except by a few rigid disciplinarians. When the clergyman repented, and was restored to the exercise of his office, he was not reordained, not having lost his *character* by the sentence of deposition, nor were his baptisms reiterated. But in the cases adduced, the ordinations were pronounced null;

because they were performed by Presbyters, “who (says *Ambrose*) gave nothing, because they had nothing to give.” This was, beyond controversy, the opinion of the fourth century.

Upon these facts I shall make one observation—It is a very surprising thing, that those who were concerned in these ordinations, did not contend for their right to ordain, and did not attach a party to themselves upon that ground. Nothing could have been more praise-worthy than to restore *primitive* ordination, and, thereby, strip usurping Bishops of their ill-gotten power. They could hardly have failed of success; for the truth of the matter, in that day, must have shone with great lustre. There could have been no difficulty in determining what were the sentiments of the second and third centuries; no more than there can be in my determining what have been the sentiments and practice of Episcopalians or Presbyterians, for the last two hundred years. The Fathers of the fourth century had the scriptures in their hands in as great purity as we have, and they were full as capable of understanding them, as we are. If, then, the scriptures assert a parity of ministers in the church, as well as the whole Christian world, for the first three centuries, in the name of common sense, how could it be that in the fourth century, hundreds of Bishops, a large number of whom are acknowledged by all to have been great and good men, could have had the impudence and wickedness, (if they had the power)

to deprive Presbyters of their just rights, and that these Presbyters should have been so stupid, or so regardless of what was due to them, as not to make the least struggle in their own defence—the people too remaining quiet spectators of this most flagitious act of injustice. Sir, if you can believe this, all I have to say is, that you have greatly the advantage of me.—*Credat Judeus Apella, non ego.*

We shall now, I think, be pretty well prepared to appreciate what you object to the testimony of *Eusebius*. You say, “No one disputes that before the time of *Constantine*, in whose reign *Eusebius* lived, a kind of prelacy prevailed,” [*a kind of prelacy!* What does that mean?] “which was more fully organized by that Emperor. But does *Eusebius* inform us what *kind of difference* there was between the Bishops and Presbyters of his day?” Supposing he does not in so many words, do not others inform us, that Bishops were an order of Apostolic institution, and that Presbyters had no power of ordaining ministers? Do not *Ambrose*,* *Chrysostom*, *Epiphanius*, and *Jerome* expressly tell us so? Do not the councils who invalidated ordinations by Presbyters tell us so? Do not all the clergy of *Mareotis* tell us so? Now, who can

* The testimony of Ambrose was forgotten in its proper place. The Father says, St. Paul had ordained Timothy a Bishop: *Unde et quemadmodum Episcopum ordinet ostendit. Neque enim faserat; aut licebat, ut inferior ordinaret majorem.* He then gives this reason—*Nemo tribuit, quod non accepit.* This testimony can never be evaded. Ambrose in loc.

doubt that *Eusebius*, who was a Bishop, held the same opinion as to the government of the church, with all the writers of his age? What *contemptible cavilling* is it to set aside the testimony of *Eusebius*, because he does not give us a detail of the particulars, in which a Bishop was superior to a Presbyter in his time, when others do, and when our opponents acknowledge that they do? What *contemptible cavilling* is it to assert, that because *Eusebius* does not expressly say, ordination is the prerogative of a Bishop, when he gives us numerous instances of Bishops ordaining Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons, and never once hints at an ordination by Presbyters, that his testimony is nothing to our purpose? What *contemptible cavilling* is it to say, that *Eusebius* can render us no service, because he does not assert that *confirmation* was administered by Bishops only, when others in the same age do assert it, particularly *Jerome*, and when several assert the same thing, from fifty to a hundred years before *Eusebius*? What *contemptible cavilling* is it to say, that because *Eusebius* does not positively declare Episcopacy to be a divine institution, and does not positively say, that Bishops in the Apostolic age, and for a hundred years afterwards, were the same as in his age, that, therefore, they were different, when he speaks of Bishops in the first three centuries, exactly as he does of Bishops in the fourth, without the least hint of any difference of authority; and when he declares the Bishops of

his time to have derived their authority by *uninterrupted succession* from the Apostles, and the Apostles theirs from Christ, and, consequently, that the Episcopal office is of divine origin? Is it not *contemptible* cavilling to say, that because *Eusebius* does not expressly declare that Bishops were *Diocesans*, that, therefore, he ought not to be considered as a witness to that kind of Episcopacy, when he gives us the names of the Bishops of the four great cities, *Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria*, in which there were many Presbyters and thousands of Christians, and, consequently, numerous congregations? But this is a point of the utmost consequence, and deserves a very particular discussion: I shall, therefore, defer it till we ascend into the *Cyprianic* age; and, I hereby promise you, that if I do not completely prove *congregational* Episcopacy to be the invention of man, that I will never more consider *diocesan* as any thing but a wise, human institution.

But to *Eusebius'* account of the succession of Bishops, you object his own acknowledgement, that he had to rely much on *tradition*, and that he was but scantily supplied with historical documents. But *Eusebius* could not mean, that he was at a loss about the government of the church, from the want of records; for if he had never seen a line upon that subject, *tradition alone* was quite sufficient to determine, whether it was Episcopal, or Presbyterian. He was born about the year 266. Now,

he must have known some who were born in the second century, from whom he could have known what the government of the church was in their youth, and who must have had the same information from hundreds who were born in the Apostolic age. Forms of government are matters of great notoriety, and can undergo no essential change, without much commotion. *Eusebius* gives no hint of any change in the government of the church; but, on the contrary, speaks of it in the same manner in the first century, in which he speaks of it in the subsequent ages down to his time. He frequently distinguishes the officers of the church by the usual names—Bishop, Presbyter, and Deacon. He also gives the succession of Bishops in different churches, which would be ridiculous, upon any other principle than that of one Bishop to a diocese. And as to the difficulty of settling the succession, for a short time, in the churches of *Rome* and *Antioch*, it is very rationally accounted for by *Hammond*, who, in *this* particular, is generally followed by learned Episcopalians. The circumstance of there being thousands of Jews in those cities, who were still tenacious of the Mosaic rites, particularly of the *Sabbath*, rendered it next to impossible for the Gentile converts to worship with them. Each, therefore, by *Apostolic indulgence*, had a Bishop, which continued probably till the destruction of *Jerusalem*. That event convinced the Jewish converts that “the law was but

a shadow of good things to come ;” and thenceforth we find in those churches a clear *single* succession. When, therefore, *Eusebius* speaks of a scantiness of materials for his history, it cannot be as to the form of church government ; for of that he could not possibly be ignorant ; but of numberless particulars of an inferior nature, which are seldom noticed in the records of any diocese, but are left to a precarious existence, by being entrusted to memory. In remote and obscure churches too, where the people were illiterate, and not much cultivated in any respect, he could be furnished with but few materials : but such as they are, we find Episcopacy every where prevailing. But after all, making every concession upon this point that can be reasonably expected, *Eusebius* had no small collection for his work. He certainly had all that we have, and a great deal that we have not. He tells us himself, that he was furnished with all the records of the churches throughout the empire, by the order of *Constantine*. He had also the histories of *Hegesippus* and *Papias*, who wrote very near the Apostolic age, and who were acquainted with numbers that had conversed with the Apostles. The learned *Valesius*, in his edition of *Eusebius*’ history, gives a long list of writings and records, with which that celebrated Bishop was furnished ; so that notwithstanding your *caveat*, and *Milton*’s sneering observations, we have quite enough in *Eusebius* to show, that a true and proper Episco-

pany existed in his day, and *had* existed from the Apostolic age.

I shall now close this letter, and in my next begin with the writings of the third century. These will bring forward the subject of *congregational* Episcopacy, and of course, what you deem facts in favour of it.

Before I conclude, I shall just observe to you, that you have a very improper way of quoting authors. If it be a Latin or Greek author, you sometimes give us the English without the original, even when the sense of the original is very different from what you give it: as when you translate *con-signant*, ordain; and in a few other instances, as will be shown hereafter; and you also give us the English, without referring us to that part of the work which contains the original. This puts an opponent to a great deal of unnecessary trouble. I must therefore tell you plainly, Sir, that if this controversy proceed, you must give the original, unless it be a passage well known, and about which there can be no dispute; or unless the passage be very long; but in *every instance*, you must note precisely the place whence you took the quotations. I will promise you to do the same: We shall then see the words of an author with our own eyes, and proceed in a fair and scholar-like manner.

LETTER III.

REV. SIR,

IN my last letter, if I do not deceive myself, I have fully proved, that all the writers of the fourth century, and in the beginning of the fifth, together with all the councils convened within that period, do assert, that Episcopacy was an Apostolical institution. I shall now proceed to consider the testimonies of individuals, and of provincial councils in the third century. And here, there is such a mass of evidence in favour of our cause, that my only difficulty lies in making such a selection, as will answer my purpose, without extending this discussion to too great a length. I shall abridge the evidence as much as I possibly can ; and shall request your patient attention to it.

You enter upon this century with the following observations. “ About this time, as will be afterwards shown, among many other corruptions, that of clerical impurity appeared in the church ; and even the papacy, as we have before seen, had begun to urge its anti-Christian claims. From the commencement of the third century, therefore, every witness on the subject of Episcopacy is to be re-

ceived with caution." In opposition to these vague and ill-founded assertions, I shall give you the testimony of *Marshal*, the learned translator of the works of *Cyprian*, Bishop of *Carthage*. Speaking of that Prelate, he says, "*Cyprian* was the Bishop of a most flourishing church, the metropolis of a province. He was a man who was made for business, had a diligent and active spirit, and talents equal to the charge wherewith he was entrusted.—The time he lived in was a busy one, and he was at the head of most transactions in it.—One hundred and fifty years had not passed from the death of one of the Apostles, when he entered upon his *See*; and the churches of Christ were then particularly careful to preserve the memory and observance of all Apostolical institutions; and had certainly better means at that time of knowing what those institutions were, than any which are now within reach of the most curious inquirer. The short hints and glances which we find in scripture, were then improved, explained, and opened, by the successive practice of the church, from her first formation; and her practice could easily be traced upwards from that time to the very fountain; and when her Bishops were so watchful, and so well united for mutual defence and counsel, it was next to impossible, that any material innovation upon her doctrine, discipline or worship, should creep in unobserved, and not be repulsed upon its first attempts. There was then no temptation from

secular views, to taint her purity in any of these particulars. Frequent persecutions reminded all her pastors of their duty; and the powers of the world had not yet either protected, or corrupted her.”* That this was the true state of the church in the third century, is, I am well convinced, the opinion of almost all who have said any thing upon this subject. I will give you the testimony of another great master of antiquity, much to the same purpose as the above. “No assignable age of the church,” says Bishop *Sage*, “were closer adherents to divine authority, or stricter observers of divine institutions, or nicer requirers of divine warrant for every thing proposed to be received by them. Never an age, wherein innovations were more carefully guarded against, or repudiated.—I might easily fill some sheets with testimonies to this purpose. Nor was it peculiar to him [*Cyprian*] to be so nice and cautious in this matter: Not one of his contemporaries was otherwise minded.”†

I will now, Sir, give you the testimony of a very distinguished *Non-conformist*, and a very stiff opposer of *diocesan* Episcopacy; I mean *Richard Baxter*. It relates intirely to the *African* churches; but that is quite sufficient for my purpose. “*In Cyprian’s* time,” says he, “they were the best ordered churches in the world; and the Bishops were the most godly, faithful, peaceable company of Bishops

* Pref. p. 15.

† Cyp. age vind. p. 532

since the Apostles' times." And of the following times he thus speaks: "Most of the *African* councils were the best in all the world; no Bishops being faithfuller than they."*

In no period, indeed, of the church, shall we find any thing like perfection. Faults, weaknesses, and deviations from purity, may be found in the individuals of that age, no doubt; and the same things may be found in the very age of the Apostles. But for any material error in doctrine, or any peculiar viciousness of life, that age is no more marked than the two preceding. Nor can any reason be assigned, why it should be. The Christians were then under dreadful persecutions, which have a powerful tendency to purify both priests and people. They had also extraordinary communications of God's Spirit, and miracles had not yet ceased.† This is an *a priori* argument, and fact perfectly corresponds with it.

More need not be added to show, that your cautions with respect to this age, are by no means well founded; but if they were; if it be conceded, that the third century was more corrupt, both in doctrine and morals, than the two preceding, still the concession would be totally irrelevant to the point under consideration; for I am not about to quote testimonies from the writers of this century, to prove a point of doctrine, nor to adduce the evidence of

* Stillingfleet's *Unreason. of Separ.* p. 245.

† See this fully proved by Church against Middleton.

flagitious characters, to prove a matter of fact. I shall require no more from you, than every court of justice upon the face of the earth would admit ; that is, to receive, and to decide upon, the evidence of honest men. This simple quality in the witnesses is enough for my purpose ; yet you may, if you please, require more of me ; you may insist upon my bringing forward men illustrious for learning, virtue and piety ; and your request shall be instantly complied with.

I adduce, then, in the first place, the great and glorious martyr, *St. Cyprian*, Bishop of *Carthage*. A volume may be filled with testimonies from this distinguished champion of the Christian faith ; and a volume actually *has* been filled with such testimonies, by Bishop *Sage*. This volume I have before me, and I am glad I have it ; for it will save me the trouble of reading over all the writings of *St. Cyprian* : I shall, however, see that every quotation corresponds with the original.

From the writings of this distinguished man, and from those of his contemporaries, I shall, if I do not deceive myself, prove the four following particulars,—1. That *St. Cyprian* was not a *congregational*, but a *diocesan* Bishop, in the strict and proper sense of the epithet. 2. That *he* and *they* believed this Episcopacy to be of divine institution. 3. That the Bishop was raised to the highest grade of the priesthood by a distinct ordination. And, 4. That he was the supreme ruler of the church, and

that all orders were governed by him. If these four points should be completely established, the cause will then be fairly gained, with respect to the third century ; and, I think, I may confidently assert, that if gained for that century, it will be also for the two preceding ; for it will be an easy matter to show, notwithstanding your plausible conjectures to the contrary, that it was morally impossible for so great a change to have taken place in so short a time ; and that too, without any writer in the third century knowing any thing about the matter.

First, then, *St. Cyprian* was not a *congregational*, but a *diocesan* Bishop.

To throw light upon this point, it is proper to observe, that *Carthage* was a very great and populous city. *Tertullian*, who was a native of it, and who flourished half a century before *Cyprian*, speaks of the Christians even in his time, as “ so numerous, as almost to constitute the greater part of every city ;” * and in his apology to the Roman magistrates, he speaks of their numbers in the following manner :—“ We are of yesterday, yet every place is filled with us : your cities, your islands, your forts, your corporations and councils, even the armies, tribes and companies, yea, the palace, senate, and courts of justice ; the temples only have we left to you. Should we go off, and separate from you, you would stand amazed at your

* Tanta hominum multitudo, pars pene major cujusque civitatis. Ter. ad Scap. c. 2.

own desolation, be affrighted at your solitary state, the stagnation of your affairs, and the stupor of death, which would seize your city.”* What folly and impudence would this imply, if there was but a single congregation in the great city of *Rome*, and the other great cities of the empire? *Eusebius*, too, conveys the same idea, when he compares the Christian churches in every city—“their thronged and crowded societies, to grain heaped upon a barn floor.”† Who can believe, after these accounts, that there were no more Christians in *Carthage*, where Christianity had been professed from the Apostolic age, than would amount to one large congregation?

Again—There was a number of Presbyters in the church of *Carthage*, and how this consists with the notion of a *single congregation*, I cannot well understand. That there was a number of Presbyters is beyond contradiction. When *Cyprian* sent *Numidicus* to be placed among the Presbyters of *Carthage*, he gives this reason for it, “that he might adorn the plenty of his Presbyters with such worthy men, it being now impaired by the fall of some,”‡ that is, during the persecution. *Cyprian* had the mortification of seeing his church

* *Hesterni sumus, et vestra omnia implevimus; urbes, insulas, castella, municipia, conciliabula, castra ipsa, tribus, decurias, palatium, senatum, forum; sola vobis reliquimus templa. Si tanta vis hominum in aliquem orbis remoti sinum abrupissemus a vobis, &c.* Apol. p. 33, c. 37.

† *Eccles. Hist. lib. ii. c. 3.*

‡ *Ep. 40.*

rent with schism. *Felicissimus* and five other Presbyters broke communion with that church; and after that, *Cyprian* mentions *Britius*, *Rogatianus*, and *Numidicus*, as the chief Presbyters. *Rome*, we well know, had, at the very same time, forty-six Presbyters, and *Constantinople* sixty. In the name of common sense, what could be the use of such a number of ministers, where there was but a single congregation? Would you not think the vestry of *Trinity-church* out of their senses, were they to call to the assistance of the Rector, sixty, or forty, or one half the number of curates, although three other very considerable congregations are connected with that mother church? And why should *moderns* be deemed mad-men for so doing, and the *ancients* be considered as acting with wisdom and piety? Take into the account also, the impracticability of one congregation maintaining such a number of clergymen, at a time, when “not many mighty, not many noble were called”—when Christians were not of the richer ranks in society. That they were all maintained by the church, besides a number of Deacons and inferior officers, is most certain; for we are repeatedly told by the *ancients*, that the offerings at the altar were the only means of supporting the Bishop, his clergy, and the poor. If, in such circumstances, Christians had not the most imperious calls to observe rigid economy, I cannot conceive in what circumstances they could have them. Be-

sides, the Christians of that day were too virtuous and pious to encourage idleness and vice ; for that would have been the inevitable consequence of maintaining such a number of supernumerary ministers. In short, broad absurdity is stamped upon the very “ head and front” of congregational Episcopacy.

But, to soften this absurdity a little, you tell us, that some of those Presbyters were ruling Elders ; although you do not pretend to say how many of them. I wonder you did not tell us that too ; for I see no more difficulty in the one case, than in the other. Who, Sir, informed you that there were ruling Elders at *Carthage* ? “ *Cyprian*, ep. 39.” Go on, Sir, if you please. “ *Cyprian*, writing to his Presbyters, and Elders, and people”—Stop here one moment. That is not the address of the Epistle. It runs thus—“ *Cyprian* to his Presbyters and Deacons, and to all the people, his brethren, sendeth greeting.”* You add *Elders* after Presbyters, which word is not in the address. This is not quite fair : I am sorry you should have had recourse to it ; but I will put it to the account of those things *quas incuria fudit*. This impropriety being corrected, proceed if you please. “ *Cyprian*, writing to his Presbyters, and Deacons, and people, respecting a certain person called *Numidicus*, enjoins that he should be reckoned with the Presbyters of that

* Ep. 39.

church, and should sit with the *clergy* to make up their Presbytery; and yet it appears, that it was only as a *ruling*, not as a *teaching* Presbyter that he was to be received by them; for *Cyprian* subjoins, “He shall be promoted, if it be the will of God, to a *more distinguished place* of his religion (or of his religious function) when through the divine protection, we shall return.” From this you infer, that *Numidicus* was no more than a ruling Presbyter; because he could not otherwise be promoted; for the Bishop was still living, and *Cyprian* had it not in his power to secure to him the succession. Now, Sir, if this be all you have to convince you, that *Numidicus* was no more than a ruling Elder, you, certainly, are a man very easily satisfied—at times. But why might not a man of *Numidicus*’ great merit have stood a very good chance to be promoted to some other *See*, among the many in *Mauritania* and *Numidia*, which were every day becoming vacant, in consequence of the dreadful persecution the church was then under? Surely, there is nothing improbable in such a supposition. *Numidicus* must have stood high in the estimation of Christians; for he had been a glorious confessor, and had almost received the crown of martyrdom. *St. Cyprian* tells us, that “he was half roasted, and covered with stones, and so left for dead; and when his daughter, with the solicitude of filial tenderness and piety, was looking for the body, she found him just alive, drew him out of the heap,

and, by the application of cordials and proper remedies, brought him to himself again.”* *Numidicus* was some country Presbyter, probably, of some remote, obscure parish, and for such a one to be removed to the city of *Carthage*, and there placed among the clergy, was, undoubtedly, promotion. *Cyprian* says, that he had a revelation from heaven, “to add the Presbyter *Numidicus*,” not the layman, nor the ruling Elder *Numidicus*, but *Numidicus* the Presbyter, “to be enrolled among”—whom? The ruling Elders? No; but the “*Carthaginian* Presbyters,” and to “sit among the clergy.” Again—“it is the pleasure of our Lord, that he should be joined with our clergy, and that our number, (of clergy) which the lapse of some Presbyters hath diminished, should be recruited, and adorned with such illustrious priests—*gloriosis sacerdotibus*. Here the light breaks in upon us irresistibly—there is nothing further to be said.

Before I conclude this point, I shall just notice your manner of translating some of the *Latin* words in your quotation. You translate, *Et promovebitur quidem cum Deus permiserit*, “he shall be promoted, if it be the will of God,” when it might with equal propriety, and much more consistency with the whole of the Epistle, be translated, “and, without doubt, he will be promoted.” This expresses *Cyprian*’s confidence, but implies no promise.

* Ep. 40.

It is really wonderful that a man of your sense, and I verily believe integrity, should suffer attachment to a cause to warp his judgment to such a monstrous degree, as appears in this instance, and in many more that will be pointed out. But why, after all, need I wonder? I find every day, by bitter experience, the great weakness of human nature. It is, indeed, pitiable; but I hope we may be *weak* without being *wicked*.

I now resume my argument, that a number of Presbyters in a city, proves that there was more than one congregation. What number of Presbyters there was in *Carthage*, it is impossible to say. *Cyprian* mentions eight, besides some who had lapsed in the persecution. Nor can we tell what number of churches there were under *Cyprian*, their Bishop; but we know to a certainty, that there *was* a number; for we have early in the next century, the very names of them as mentioned by *Victor Vitensis*, and *St. Augustine*;^{*} and this I think completely does the business for *congregational* Episcopacy at *Carthage*. Besides the *Cathedral* called *Basilica Major*, in which the Bishop always sat according to *Victor*, there were the *Basilica Fausti*—the *Basilica Leontiana*,[†] the *Basilica Celerina*, otherwise called *Scillitanorum*—the *Basilica Novarum*—the *Basilica Petri*, besides two great

* L. 1. August. Sermon 4, 14, 102, as quoted by Stillingfleet in his *Unreas. of Separ.* p. 249.

† Lib. iii. Ep. 5. 15.

churches mentioned by *Victor* without the city; one, where *St. Cyprian* suffered martyrdom, and the other, in which he was buried, called *Mappalia*. And “I do not question,” says *Stillingfleet*, “there were many others which I have not observed; for *Victor* says, that when *Geisericus* entered *Carthage*, he found there the Bishop (quod vult Deus) and a very great multitude of clergy (maximan turbam clericorum), all of whom he banished.” This looks very much like congregational Episcopacy, to be sure!

It is hardly worth while to say any thing more, with respect to the church of *Carthage*. There is, however, one more proof that I shall give of the vast number of Christians in that great city. It is this—The persecution at *Carthage* was so dreadful, that *St. Cyprian* tells us, the number of the *lapsed* was so great, that every day thousands of tickets were granted by the *martyrs* and *confessors* in their behalf for reconciliation to the church; and in one of those tickets, a number of persons might be comprehended, the form being—*communicet ille cum suis*—let him and his friends communicate.

Notwithstanding these positive proofs, that there were vast numbers of Christians at *Carthage*, a large body of clergy, and, consequently, a number of churches, several of which have been named, you boldly assert, that there was but one congregation in that city. Look, Sir, at the sun when it is blazing in the firmament, and say it does not shine,

and you will come as near to the truth, as when you say, *Cyprian* was the Bishop of but a single congregation. Really, Sir, it answers no purpose to dispute at this rate ; and I do assure you, that I should not have thought it worth while to write a line upon the subject, were people in general acquainted with it ; but there is such a prevalent ignorance among all denominations, of the merits of this cause, and even among Episcopalians, that it is necessary to administer an antidote to the poison contained in your book ; especially, as it is well gilded, and thereby secured from common inspection. I entertain, however, great hopes, that our own people at least, will be induced to give this subject a thorough investigation, and that the remarks, and reasonings, and testimonies produced in the course of the controversy, will keep them from being led astray by your very partial, and very unfair view of the question.

But, perhaps, our readers may think, although *congregational* Episcopacy was not established at *Carthage*, yet that it may have been in all other churches, as they find you positively asserting, that such was the case. But this assertion, with respect to other churches, is as groundless, as with respect to the church of *Carthage*. Let us next take a view of the church of *Alexandria*, and see if we can there find *congregational* Episcopacy.

Dionysius, Bishop of *Alexandria* in the third century, speaking of that city, says, “ it was a very

great city, and the Geographer published by Gothofred informs us, that it was *an exceeding great city; so great that it was past men's comprehension.*" Ammianus Marcellinus also declares, that "*it was the top of all cities.*" And for the number of Christians there, Dionysius says, "in a time of great persecution, when he was banished, he kept up the assemblies in the city [by means of his Presbyters;] and at *Cephro* he had a large church, partly of the Christians of *Alexandria* who followed him, and partly from other places; and when he was removed thence to *Collutheon*, such numbers of Christians flocked out of the city, that they were forced to have distinct congregations."* Eusebius also says, that "in *St. Mark's* time the Christians had several churches in *Alexandria.*"† And if in *St. Mark's* time, we may be assured that they were greatly increased in the third century. The *Nicene* council, you know, was held early in the fourth century, not long after the time of *Dionysius*. What says that council? "Let the old customs be kept up." What were they? "Let the Bishop of *Alexandria* have power over all" [that is, over all the Bishops of] "*Egypt, Lybia, and Pentapolis.*"‡ This was, it seems, according to the old custom. Now, was the Bishop of *Alexandria* a congregational Bishop?—I need say no more about this church.

* See Stillingfleet's *Unreas. of Sep.* p. 255, 256.

† Euseb. lib. ii. Hist. c. 17.

‡ See Taylor on *Epis.* p. 140.

Let us next take the church of *Rome* under our consideration, and see whether your prospect be any better there.

Cornelius, Bishop of that church, and contemporary with *St. Cyprian*, informs us, “that he had under him forty-six Presbyters, seven Deacons, seven Sub-Deacons,” besides a number of attendants of one sort or other, “all necessary,” says he, “to the service of the church, besides widows, impotent and poor, above fifteen hundred, and a vast innumerable multitude of people in it.”* We are further told, that “they supported many other churches in every city, relieving their poor, and maintaining their Christian slaves that were condemned to the mines.”† And *Dionysius*, of *Alexandria*, affirms, that “the whole country of *Arabia*, and all the provinces of *Syria*, were abundantly relieved by the church of *Rome* alone.”‡ Now, I defy any man living, let his ingenuity be what it may, to accommodate this account to the notion of congregational Episcopacy.

I shall notice but two more churches, and then conclude this part of the controversy.

The first is the church of *Antioch*, even in its infancy. Upon the death of *St. Stephen*, many Christians fled from *Jerusalem*, and some of them coming to *Antioch*, we are told, that “the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number be-

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. vi. c. 43.

† Ibid. lib. iv. c. 23.

‡ Ibid. lib. vii. c. 5. Acts xi. 19.

lieved and turned unto the Lord." Upon intelligence of this, the sacred college of Apostles at *Jerusalem* sent *Barnabas* to *Antioch* to improve this happy opportunity, and (says the text)* "much people was added to the Lord." Further to promote this good work, the great Apostle of the Gentiles joined *Barnabas*, and they *continued a whole year* together teaching much people. "What a harvest of Christian converts these Apostolical labourers made in that compass of time, assisted by all that fled thither from *Jerusalem*, besides by the men of *Cyprus* and *Cyrene*,† fellow labourers with them to convert the *Greeks* as well as *Jews* to the faith, and by the several inspired prophets so peculiarly noted to be amongst them, I refer to the sober judgment of all who know the fruits of many single sermons preached by an Apostle, at the first promulgation of the gospel.—Such was the very infant state of this church of *Antioch*; the oversight whereof, antiquity tells us, the great Apostle *St. Peter*, in a peculiar manner took upon himself, and for six or seven years, at least, made it his first and special *Apostolic see*. After him, church history acquaints us with fourteen Bishops successively there, before the heretic, *Paul of Samosata*, was promoted to that see."‡ And of that heretical Bishop, *Eusebius* informs us, that "he sent Presbyters out to preach up his own praises in their ser-

* V. 21—27.

† Acts xi. 20.

‡ Draught of the primitive church.

mons to the people.”* Let it be remembered too, that *Tertullian* has been quoted saying, that “the Christians were well nigh the greater part of every city;” and *Chrysostom* calculates, that “in the time of *Ignatius*, *Antioch* contained no less than *two hundred thousand souls*.”† If, Sir, you can make out of this *congregational* Episcopacy, I shall say, you are “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.”

The last church I shall notice is that of *Jerusalem*—the mother and pattern of all churches. The state of this church, both in its rise, and in its progress, is accurately described by Dr. *Maurice*, and in an abridged manner, by Bishop *Skinner*, in his answer to *Campbell's Ecclesiastical Lectures*. It is as follows:—“In the first chapter of the *Acts*, we are told, that the number of the disciples assembled, when *Matthias* was added to the eleven Apostles, was about a *hundred and twenty*; but these could be only a part of the church, as we are assured, that our Lord appeared, after his resurrection, to above *five hundred brethren at once*; the greater part of whom remained, when *St. Paul* wrote his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. In the second chapter of the *Acts*, we read that there were added unto them about *three thousand souls*, and that, ‘the Lord was daily adding to the church such as should be saved.’ If it shall be objected, that of these three thousand, who were converted

* Euseb. lib. vii. c. 30, p. 229.

† See Cave's Life of Ignatius, p. 101.

on the day of Pentecost, there might be a considerable number, who had come up from other countries to celebrate that holy feast at *Jerusalem*, it should be remembred that they are said to have *continued in the Apostle's fellowship, and breaking of bread, and prayers*, which, as the church was then situated, implies that they continued with them in *Jerusalem*, and so became inhabitants of that city, if they were not so before. But should any deduction be made from their number, nothing of that kind can be pretended in the next instance ; for in the fourth chapter of the *Acts*, we are told, that on the preaching of *Peter* and *John*, ‘ many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand. Again, we read in the fifth chapter, that, *believers were more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women*; and in the sixth, that *the word of God still increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith*. In addition to all these successive accounts of the vast increase of believers, we are informed in the twenty-first chapter, that when *Paul* came up to *Jerusalem*, and went in to *James* and his Presbyters,—*they said unto him, thou seest, brother, how many thousands [myriads in the original] there are of Jews which believe.*”* Now, Sir, what number of *myriads*

* Skinner's General Defence, p. 249, 250, 251.

ought there to be to justify the expression, *thou seest, brother, how many myriads?* I should think *five* or *six*, if even that would come up to the words *how many*. Mr. *M'Leod* supposes, that there were fifty thousand Christians at *Jerusalem*,* and I verily believe that he is not out of the way. Now, as *he*, who is a strict *Presbyterian*, and, of course, no lover of *Episcopacy*, thinks there was so great a number there, yet *I*, who am as strict an *Episcopalian*, and, of course, a lover of *Episcopacy*, will be more moderate, and strike off one half the number. How many congregations would these twenty-five thousand form, at a time, be it remembered, when Christians did not meet in large churches, but in private houses, and such places as they could readily command? I should think, that five hundred to a congregation is a large allowance, and then we shall have fifty congregations. These congregations were blessed with the ministry of a number of *Presbyters*, who are repeatedly mentioned in the *Acts of the Apostles*; and over these *Presbyters*, and this numerous body of Christians, presided *St. James*, the Lord's brother. This is evident enough from the scriptures, and the testimony of the Fathers is in perfect coincidence with them. And can you, Sir, with the Bible in your hands, tell your *Christian brethren*, that there was but one congregation at *Jerusalem*? What evidence is

* Catechism.

there for any fact whatever, stronger, and less capable of contradiction than this? What proof can you desire more decisive than what I have given you, that congregational Episcopacy had no existence in the primitive ages? Sir, it is a mere whim, the production of that restless, fanatical tribe, that overthrew the church and state of *England* in the seventeenth century. *Calvin* knew nothing about it; he was a Presbyterian, as I supposed you were, till I saw your book. *Beza* knew nothing about it — *John Knox* knew nothing about it. Who *did* know any thing about it, till it was broached by the *Congregationalists*, near a hundred years after the reformation? I am astonished to find you an advocate for a system of church government, different from that of the church to which you belong. Pray, Sir, who is the Bishop of the Presbyterian church in this city? I know who ought to be, if age, and venerableness, and long services, were to decide the question. But, I am pretty confident, that you will not allow that venerable man to be your Bishop. No, Sir, you consider him as your colleague; but no Bishop in the primitive church ever considered Presbyters as his colleagues. You consider yourself as his *equal* in every thing relating to the church; and, therefore, upon your own principle, for you allow a Bishop to have some superiority over his Presbyters, your church is not founded upon the Apostolical plan. You are not the first that opposed the government of the church to

which he belonged. Dr. Campbell did the same. While a minister of the church of *Scotland*, and holding one of the most dignified, lucrative stations under its establishment, he was teaching his pupils to despise its government, and to adopt a system, which, if carried into effect, would totally overthrow it. You, indeed, differ in one particular from him. *He* was an enemy to *ruling* elders: *You* are an advocate for them. But this difference does not essentially affect the main point—*congregational* Episcopacy. *Your* scheme has a dash of Presbyterianism in it—*his* wants that *ornamental* circumstance; but which of the two is the better, I shall leave to the *taste* of our readers to decide.

In my next letter I shall examine those *facts*, as you are pleased to call them, which you adduce in favour of *congregational* Episcopacy.

LETTER IV.

REV. SIR,

I COME now to examine, what you call *facts*, in favour of *congregational* Episcopacy.

You say,* “ the first fact is, the great number of Bishops, which ecclesiastical historians inform us, were found in early periods of the church, within several districts of country. *Eusebius* tells us, that about the year 260, when *Gallienus* was Emperor, *Paul*, Bishop of *Antioch*, began to oppose the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. A council was immediately called at *Antioch*, to consider and judge of *Paul*’s heresy. *Dionysius*, Bishop of the church of *Alexandria*, being invited, came to this council ; and the historian, after mentioning six conspicuous names, adds, “ It would be no wise difficult to enumerate *six hundred* other Bishops, who all flowed together to that place.”—I am really, Sir, surprised at your inaccuracy. *Eusebius*, instead of telling us that *Dionysius* was there, tells us quite the contrary, that he *was not* there ; being detained by age and infirmities.† He sent his opinion in writing,

* Letter v. p. 198, 199. † Eccl. Hist. lib. vii. c. 27.

and died soon after, in the twelfth year of *Gallienus*, having been Bishop of *Alexandria* seventeen years. I do not notice this inaccuracy, because it is of any consequence to the dispute; but merely to show that it is necessary to be on one's guard, and not implicitly to subscribe to what you are pleased to call *facts*.

The learned *Bingham*, in his *Antiquities of the Church*,* has given us the *Notitia*, or geographical description of the ancient Bishoprics, as first made by the order of *Leo Sapiens* about the year 891. Run your eye over that *Notitia*, and you will see what vast territories it comprehends—the whole of the present Turkish empire, and a great deal more. That great antiquary has also given us a view of the *sees* of *Egypt*, of all *Africa*, and of *Europe*, with as much accuracy as can reasonably be expected, on a subject of this nature. The *Notitia* of the dioceses in the *Greek* empire is the most correct; and it affords ample proof, that if the council of *Antioch* was composed of none but Bishops from the *Asiatic* and *Grecian* dioceses, there was room sufficient for double the number of Bishops that attended that council. The ancient *sees* were not, I believe, as large as many in modern times; yet there was a number of large ones. *Bingham* says,† “the ancient church had many small dioceses, as well as large ones, particularly

* Vol. i. p. 396.

† Vol. i. p. 409.

in *Italy*, where many were not above five or six miles from one another, and not above ten, or twelve miles in extent." He adds, "there are now a great many such dioceses in *Italy*, in the realm of *Naples*, where the whole number is a hundred and forty-seven; twenty of which are archbishoprics; and some of them so small as not to have any diocese beyond the walls of the city. And there are some dioceses at present in the southern parts of *France*, which, I am told, do not very much exceed that proportion. The Bishopric of the *Isle of Man* has now but seventeen parishes, and in *Bede's* time, the whole island had but three or four hundred families." It is evident from all this, that arguing from two or three of the primitive councils being composed of five or six hundred Bishops, in favour of *congregational* Episcopacy, is extremely fallacious, and entitled to no kind of regard; particularly, when the almost irresistible evidence which has been adduced for *diocesan* Episcopacy, is contrasted with it.

But this is not all.—This matter is reduced by *Bingham* to a still greater degree of precision, in his view of the *African* dioceses.* In the whole extent of that country, from the borders of *Egypt* to the western part of the peninsula, comprehending a length of 2360 miles, and a breadth, in some places of 200, in others of 500 miles, there were but

* *Antiq.* vol. i. p. 354.

466 dioceses, as appears, says my author, from the *Collation of Carthage*, the *Abstract of St. Austin*, and the *Notitia* of the *African* church, made about fifty years after *Austin's* death, and published by *Sirmondus*. So that the *African* church, which, according to *Baxter*, was, in *St. Cyprian's* time, the best ordered of any church in the world, had dioceses of large extent. Dr. *Maurice* says, that one with another, they may be reckoned to contain three or fourscore towns and villages. We know that *St. Austin's* diocese of *Hippo* was above forty miles long; for he himself tells us, that *Fessala*, a place in his diocese, was forty miles distant from *Hippo*. We also know, that in *Tripolis*, one of the six provinces of the *Roman Africa*, there were but five Bishops. This we learn from the canons of the *African* councils, and from the ancient *Notitia* of that church, which names the five sees. "So that," (says Bingham) "whether we compare the whole extent and dimensions of *Africa* with the number of dioceses contained therein, or consider any particular province, or diocese by itself, it plainly appears, that every Bishop had a city, and a region, or large territory for his diocese."—Does this look like *congregational* Episcopacy?

But now comes the grand and mortal blow to *diocesan* Episcopacy. "*Dalmatius*, the Bishop of *Cyzicum*, who assisted at the general council of *Ephesus*, against the *Nestorians*, told the Emperor that there were *six thousand* Bishops in the council, who

opposed *Nestorius*." This, Sir, carries improbability upon the very face of it. Six thousand Bishops! In the name of common sense, what building could have afforded accommodations for such a multitude? In the name of common sense, what business could have been carried on without confusion, and endless altercation? Sir, the thing is incredible. At least, when you give us such an extraordinary piece of information, you ought also to give us your author. Are you ashamed of him? If not, why do you not mention him? Surely we are entitled to your authority for what you assert. Who is this *Dalmatius* that told the Emperor this wonderful story? Did he ever write any thing? If he were an author of any note, we should certainly find him in *Mosheim*, or in *Cave's Literary History*. I have looked into both, but cannot find any such name: but I can tell you, Sir, what I have found in the latter;—that this same council of *Ephesus* consisted of no more than two hundred Bishops, or thereabouts.* *Dupin* also says, "The condemnation of *Nestorius* was pronounced by two hundred Bishops, or thereabouts."† This is much more probable than the account you have given us. There never was a council that consisted of half the number of Bi-

* *Ephesinum* 1st. Occumenicum Sd. Theodosii Imp. jussu, a cc circiter Episcopis, anno 431, proximi post Festam Pentecostes, in Ecclesia B. Mariae celebratum. Lit. Hist. A pretty large church to hold six thousand people!!!

† Vol. iv. p. 187.

shops. The largest upon record, I believe, is the second of *Chalcedon*, in the year 451. That is said to have consisted of between six and seven hundred Bishops; and that number the *Eastern* empire alone could have furnished with a great deal of ease, and the Bishops be, at the same time, the governors of pretty extensive dioceses; as, I think, has been made out very evidently.

I have but one observation more to make upon this *Dalmatian* tale. It is this: It is universally acknowledged by the most learned Presbyterian writers, that *diocesan* Episcopacy existed in the church long before the fourth century. Now it is a very extraordinary thing, that you should believe, and want your readers to believe, such a story from, *no one knows who*, when no mortal pretends to contest the point for one hundred and fifty years before that period. How is this? Have you discovered, what no body else ever discovered, that *diocesan* Episcopacy was unknown in the Christian world, in the fourth century? Will you maintain that point? I have a right to call upon you to be explicit. If you will not commit yourself on that ground, then why do you adduce such a silly tale, to prove what you do not think tenable? Sir, this is not treating *us*, nor your *Christian brethren*, fairly. Numbers will be misled by your positive, yet groundless assertions; and when the mind once becomes perverted, it is not an easy matter to reclaim it. Those who cannot examine for them-

selves, generally trust to those, of whose abilities and integrity they have a good opinion; hence, there should be the utmost caution in asserting facts, and the utmost fairness and candour in exhibiting the evidence for them. All this, no doubt, you mean to observe; but, notwithstanding, I have given some sad specimens of gross misrepresentation.

The next *fact* which you produce, is much of a piece with the last; and I do not know, but of the two, the more ridiculous. You say, “We are told by Archbishop *Usher*, and other ecclesiastical historians, that *Patrick*, the Apostle of *Ireland*, who went thither about the year 432, founded in that island 365 churches, ordained over them the same number of Bishops, and also ordained for these churches 3000 Elders.” And, in a note, you observe, “This single fact, so well authenticated—is little short of demonstration, that primitive Episcopacy was *parochial*, and not *diocesan*.” Here I must lay down my pen, and breathe a little—this is too much for me. Well, Sir, we have, it seems, according to this story, *St. Patrick*, who lived in the fifth century, when all our adversaries acknowledge *diocesan* Episcopacy was universal, and who was also made a Bishop of that kind by Pope *Celestine*, converting the *Irish*, and planting among them *Presbyterian parity*. I shall not think it incredible, after this, should I hear of the Presbyterian missionaries planting Episcopacy among the *Ir-*

dians whom they convert, nor of Episcopal missionaries planting a Presbyterian regimen among them. We have seen, in our day, strange inversions in the *political* world; why not also in the *ecclesiastical*? The thing is not *physically* impossible, it must be confessed, however unanswerable the *moral* arguments may be. But let us leave *a priori* reasoning, and come to the evidence of the fact.

What says *Mosheim* upon this subject? “*Patrick* brought over great numbers of the *Irish* to the Christian religion, and founded, in the year 472, the Archbishopric of *Armagh*, which has ever since remained the *Metropolitan see* of the *Irish* nation.”* This testimony is confirmed by the authority of *Prosper*, which is decisive upon this point. Here now is a curiosity, *nuper inventum, et ante hæc tempora inauditum*—An Archbishop presiding over 365 *Presbyterian* Bishops, and 3000 Elders, some *preaching*, and some *ruling* Elders! And this Archbishop establishing this regimen, under the direction of the *Roman Pontiff*! To propose this, is to set common sense at defiance. “But does not *Usher* say this, or something like it?” No, Sir, he says no such thing, nor any thing like it. But if he *did*, what is his authority? All that he knew about the ancient *Irish* church, he derives from some fragments of the lives of some *Irish* Bishops, which he too hastily adopted, for the purpose of

* *Eccles. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 2.

proving that *Palladius* was not the first Bishop of *Ireland*. “But,” says the learned translator of *Mosheim*, “it has been evidently proved, among others, by *Bollandus*, that these *fragments* are of no earlier date than the twelfth century, and are besides, the most of them fabulous.”

We have no records of the church of *Ireland* before the twelfth century, upon which we can place the least dependance. *Bingham* observes, that, “the accounts are so uncertain and dark, that *Carolus a sancto Paulo* does not pretend to give any other catalogue of them, but what he has from *Camden* and the *Provinciale Romanum*, both of which are modern accounts. These catalogues take notice of four Archbishoprics in *Ireland*, which number of Metropolitan *sees* was first introduced by *Pope Eugenius*, in the year 1151. Yet—because we have no catalogues of *Irish* dioceses older, or more authentic than these, it will not be amiss to insert them.” He then gives *Camden*’s list, which amounts to four Archbishops, and fifty-two Suffragans, and afterwards that of the *Provinciale Romanum*, published by *Carolus a sancto Paulo*, which makes the same number of Archbishops, but increases the list of Suffragans to fifty-three. “This seems,” says *Bingham*, “to have been the greatest number of Bishops that *Ireland* ever had since it was a Christian nation. For as to the pretence of some modern writers, that there were at one time no less than 365 Bishops ordained by *St. Patrick*,

it is solidly refuted by Dr. *Maurice*, who shows plainly, that the story is not to be understood of so many Bishops at once, but of that number in the reign of four kings successively, and in the compass of one hundred years ; which, any one that carefully reads Bishop *Usher's* Antiquities, whence the ground of the story is fetched, will easily discern. And it is no hard matter to conceive then, how there might be 350, or, as *Nennius* tells the story, 365 Bishops in the compass of a whole century, though there were not above fifty, or threescore, at one time living together.”* I think your well-authenticated fact is now completely annihilated.

Another of your *facts* to prove *congregational* Episcopacy, is, the manner in which the Bishop and his clergy sat in the church.—Sir, I am tired of your facts. They are either so little to the purpose, or so totally groundless, that they should not have had a moment's consideration from me, were it not that I am confident persons of little reading, and less thinking, will be led into error by them. But this last fact is so much below even *your* standard of facts, that I think it hardly worth while to take notice of it.

Pray, Sir, were there no particular occasions when the Bishop required the aid of a number of his Presbyters? No ordinations? No confirmations in the Cathedral church? No *diocesan* conventions?

* Ant. vol. i. p. 490.

How strangely inadvertent must you have been to these circumstances, when you urged such a shadow in favour of your hypothesis? Who would suppose, that a semicircle of seats in *Trinity* church for the Bishop's Presbyters, would afford to a disputant in some future day, an argument against diocesan Episcopacy in this State? Your cause must really be in great want of support, when you are obliged to have recourse to such trifles.

Your last fact is as follows: "The early writers represent the Bishop as *living in the same house with his Presbyters, or Elders*—a house near the place of worship, to which they resorted, and capable of accommodating them all." Here, as usual, you take care not to tell us who those *early writers* are, or how *early* they are; that would, perhaps, have diminished the weight of the evidence. And you also state the case in such a manner, that your readers who know no better, would suppose that it was the universal practice. Let us for a moment suppose this to have been the case. Take an instance in the third century. It is certain that *Cornelius*, Bishop of *Rome*, had forty-six Presbyters under him. Now, you know very well, that clergymen generally marry, and that they have as many children as other folks. I doubt, whether there is one clergyman in twenty that does not marry; but say, if you please, one in ten. *Cornelius* then, must have had upwards of forty married Presbyters, with their wives and children, in the same house

with him. You cannot reckon less than three children to a family; so that there must have been upwards of eighty men and women, and of a hundred and twenty children in the same house with Bishop *Cornelius*. Mercy on the man! He must have had a shocking time of it. If he had nothing else to induce him to wish for martyrdom, than to get rid of such a tormenting scene, I should not much blame him.—No, Sir, this is too ridiculous for any man to believe. The fact was, that in the latter part of the fourth century, when the spirit of *monkery* began to prevail, there were a *few* associations of that kind. Those clergymen, of course, did not marry; nor could they have been the clergy of the country. “But,” says *Bingham*, “this they did, not by any general canon, but only upon choice, or particular combination and agreement, in some particular churches. As *Sozomen* notes it to have been the custom at *Rinocorura* in *Egypt*, and *Possidius* affirms the same of the Cathedral church of *St. Austin*.”* But this must be confined to the city Presbyters, as that Bishop’s diocese extended to *Fessala*, forty miles from *Hippo*. And thus we see, to what the sum total of your *facts* amounts.

I have now, if I do not deceive myself, fully answered your proofs from facts, that *congregational* Episcopacy was the government of the church in the third and fourth centuries; and have also given

* *Antiq.* vol. i. p. 195.

proof enough to an impartial mind, from the circumstance of a Bishop's having a number of Presbyters, and churches, and thousands of Christians under his government, that he was a proper *diocesan*. But I shall not leave the matter here—I have a vast collection of proofs, of every possible kind, now lying before me, in *Sage's Cyprianic Age*; which proofs, I inform you, once for all, I shall take the liberty of borrowing, so far as will answer my purpose.

First then:—It cannot be contradicted that *Cyprian* was Bishop of *Carthage*, and that he had a number of Presbyters under him, contradistinguished from the Bishop and Deacons;—*Priests* in the language then current—not *Ruling Elders*; but such as laboured in the word and sacraments. Such as were honoured with the *divine priesthood*—such as were constituted in the *clerical* ministry—who attended the *Altar*, and offered up the *public prayers*.*—Such as in the time of persecution went to the prisons, and gave the *holy eucharist* to the *confessors*.† In a word, such as were joined with the Bishop in the *sacerdotal honour*.‡ Such were the Presbyters of *St. Cyprian's* church; “For,” says *Sage*, “as to your *Lay-Elders*, your *Ruling*, contradistinguished from *Teaching* Presbyters, now so much in vogue, there is as profound a silence of them in *St. Cyprian's* works and time, as there is of the so-

* Ep. i. p. 1.

† Ibid. v. p. 11.

‡ Ibid. lxi.

lemn league and covenant: And yet, considering how much he has left upon record about the governors, the government, and the discipline of the church, if there had been any such Presbyters, it is next to a miracle, that he should not so much as once mentioned them.”*

2. Let the Presbyters of a church be ever so numerous, and the number of the laity ever so great, the Bishop’s authority and pastoral relation extended to all. The church was compared to a *ship*, and the Bishop was the *master*†—he was the *father*, and all the Christians within his district were his *children*—he was the *governor*, the *rector*, the *head*, the *judge* in all spiritual matters within his diocese.‡ He was the *chief* pastor, and Presbyters were *pastors* in subordination to him.

Let us now try if we can ascribe these characters to the *Moderator* of a Presbytery. A Presbyterian Moderator, *as such*, is no *church governor* at all; but a Bishop, *as such*, was *chief pastor*, *judge*, *head*, *master*, *rector*, *governor*, of all the Christians within his diocese.—A *Presbyterian Moderator*, *as such*, has no direct, immediate, formal relation to the *people*, but only to the *Presbytery*. He is the *mouth*, and keeps order in managing the affairs of the *Presbytery*, not of the *church*, or rather churches, within the bounds of that Presbytery;

* Princip. Cyp. Age, p. 8. † Ep. 41.

‡ Gubernator passim. Rector. Ep. 59. Caput. Ep. 45. Judex Ep. 59.

but a Bishop in *St. Cyprian's* time, was a different thing—his prelacy related to the *laity*, as well as to the *clergy*. If, Sir, you can reconcile these things, you are the first man I have ever met with, who can reconcile contradictions.—But,

3dly. It was a maxim in the *Cyprianic* age, that there could be but *one* Bishop at *once* in a church. Upon this principle, *Cyprian* repeatedly reasons against schism, as you may see by consulting the references at the bottom of the page.* But upon your principle, there were as many Bishops as there were churches. There must have been at least eight at Carthage, forty-six at Rome, and a number more or less, in all the great churches, in which, I have shown, there was a plurality of Presbyters; and each of these Bishops, according to your scheme, had a number of elders, some *preaching*, and some *ruling* elders. Nothing can be more opposite than these two plans of ecclesiastical regimen.

Nor was this principle of *one* Bishop to a church, although that church was composed of a great number of churches, peculiar to *St. Cyprian*. *Cornelius*, Bishop of *Rome*, insists on it in his epistle to *Fabius*, and severely censures *Novatianus* for acting contrary to it. And when *Maximus*, *Urbanus*, &c. deserted *Novatianus*, and returned to *Cornelius's* communion, they made a solemn confession, that upon that maxim they ought to have con-

* Epistles 55, 44, 45, 46, 59, 61, 68, 69, and Un. Eccles. p. 110.

sidered *Novatianus* as a false and schismatical Bishop. "We know," say they, "that *Cornelius* was chosen Bishop of the most holy Catholic church, by the Omnipotent God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. We confess our error; we were imposed upon. For we are not ignorant that there is one God—one Christ, one Lord, whom we have confessed—one Holy Ghost; and that there ought to be but one Bishop in a Catholic church,"* that is, at *once*, of one church or city.

4th. When a *see* was canonically vacant, an election was made, differently indeed, as to the mode, in different churches. The Bishops of the province, at least a number of them, met, for the purpose of ordaining the Bishop elect. His orders, as a Presbyter, were not sufficient; he received a *new* ordination. Thus, *Cyprian* was first a Presbyter, and afterwards ordained Bishop of *Carthage*, according to his Deacon *Pontius*, *Eusebius*, and *Jerome*.† Thus, *Cyprian* tells us, that "*Cornelius* had advanced, gradually, through all the inferior stations;"‡ and, consequently, had been a Presbyter before he was a Bishop. Yet we find, when he was promoted to the *see* of *Rome*, he was ordained by sixteen Bishops.§ Thus we find also, in the promotion of *Sabinus* to the Bishopric, from which *Basilides* had fallen, that he was ordained by the imposition of the hands of the Bishops pre-

* Ep. 49. † Pont. in vita Cyp. Euseb. Chron. Hieron. Catal.

‡ Ep. 55.

§ Ibid. 55.

sent.* Thus *Fortunatus*, *Achimnius*, *Optatus*, *Privatianus*, *Donatulus*, and *Felix*, six Bishops, ordained a Bishop at *Capsis*.† “Nay,” says *Sage*, “this necessity of a new ordination for raising one to the Episcopal power was so notorious *then*, that the schismatics themselves believed it indispensable: and, therefore, *Novatianus*, though formerly a Presbyter (as *Cornelius* expressly says, in his epistle to *Fabius*) when he contended with *Cornelius* for the chair of *Rome*, that he might have had the *show* at least of a *canonical* ordination, got three inconsiderate Bishops to come to the city, and then forced them to give him the Episcopal mission, *by an imaginary and vain imposition of hands*, as *Cornelius* expresses it.‡ Thus also, when *Fortunatus*, one of the five Presbyters who joined with the schismatical *Felicissimus* against *St. Cyprian*, set himself up as an anti-bishop at *Carthage*, he was ordained by *five false Bishops*.”||

Now, Sir, try if you can reconcile all this with the notion of a *Presbyterian Moderator*. What need was there for sixteen Bishops, that is, sixteen *Moderators* to meet at *Rome*, to conduct the election of a *Moderator*? Could not the Presbytery of *Rome* have chosen their own *Moderator* without the trouble, or the inspection of so many *Moderators* of other Presbyters? Again—What neces-

* Ep. 67.

† Ep. 56.

‡ Euseb. lib. vi. c. 43.

|| Ep. 59.

sity was there for a *new* ordination for constituting one a *Moderator* of a Presbytery? I have never heard of any ceremony in your Presbyteries on such an occasion; to be sure, not that of ordaining. And if they must have had an ordination, why could not the forty-six Presbyters at *Rome* have done the business, without sending for sixteen neighbouring Moderators? Sir! Sir! this is far, very far below men of sense. It is, to speak plainly, *the very mystery of ridiculousness*.

I have now proved, I think, to a moral certainty, that Episcopacy, in the age of *Cyprian*, was of the *diocesan* kind; and that *congregational* Episcopacy is at irreconcilable variance with all the documents of that age, so far as I have adduced them. I have shown, with a force of evidence that appears to me to be next to irresistible, that Bishops had, in the third century, a number of Presbyters, and thousands of Christians, and, consequently, numerous congregations, under their spiritual jurisdiction, and that when they were raised to "the sublime top of the priesthood," [sacerdotal sublime fastigium] as *Cyprian* speaks, it was done, not *by election only*, but by a *new imposition of hands*, or *new ordination*, by a number of Bishops belonging to the province. This, of course, designated him to a higher sphere;—invested him with superior powers to those which he possessed while a Presbyter. I shall now show what those superior powers were; and this being done, I think the

question, so far as relates to the third century, will be completely settled.

1. The Bishop had the *sole power of confirmation*. For this we have *St. Cyprian's* express testimony, in his epistle to *Jubaianus*. It was the custom "to offer such as were baptized to the Bishops, that, by their prayers, and the laying on of their hands, they might receive the Holy Ghost, and be consummated by the sign of our Lord." And he expressly founds this practice, as, after him, *Jerome* did, upon Acts viii. 14, &c.* *Cornelius* also, in his epistle to *Fabius*, makes it an argument against *Novatianus*, that though he was baptized, yet he was not confirmed by the Bishop.† *Firmilian* also, in his epistle to *Cyprian*, says, "the Elders" (meaning the Bishops) "who govern the church, possess the power of baptism, confirmation, and ordination."‡

2. The Bishop had the *sole power of ordination*. No ordination could be performed without him; but he *alone* could do it. It is true, *St. Cyprian* generally *did*, and every prudent Bishop generally *will*, consult the clergy that are within his call; and will not introduce among them men of whom they disapprove. But there is no obligation to this, but what arises from expediency. This was evidently *St. Cyprian's* sentiment and practice. In

* Ep. 73.

† Apud Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. vi. c. 43.

‡ Ep. 75.

his 38th epistle, having, in the place of his retirement, ordained *Aurelius* a reader in the church, he acquaints his Presbyters and Deacons with it. He begins his letter thus: "In all ecclesiastical ordinations, most dear brethren, I used to consult you beforehand, and to examine the manners and merits of every one with common advice."* In this instance he had deviated from his common practice, which shows that he had the power and the right of doing so whenever he thought proper; and this right he had in all ordinations: for he speaks indefinitely, in *clericis ordinationibus*. We have another testimony to the same purpose in his 41st epistle, in which, we are informed, that he had deputed two Bishops, *Caldonius* and *Herculanus*; and two of his Presbyters, *Rogatianus* and *Numidicus*, "to examine the ages, qualifications, and merits of some in Carthage, that he whose province it was to promote men to ecclesiastical offices might be well informed about them, and promote none but such as were meek, humble, and worthy."† This is a striking testimony; for he speaks of all orders, without exception; and of himself in the singular number; and founds that power upon his having the government of the church committed to him.‡

A third testimony you will find in his 72d epistle, written to *Stephen*, Bishop of *Rome*. It runs thus: "By common consent and authority,

* Ep. 38.

† Ep. 41.

‡ See Cyp. Age, p. 40.

dear brother, we tell you farther, that if any Presbyters, or Deacons, who have either been ordained before in the Catholic church, and have afterwards turned perfidious, and rebellious against the church, or have been promoted by a profane ordination, in a state of schism, by *false Bishops*, and *Anti-Christ*s against our Lord's institution ;—that such, if they should return, shall only be admitted to lay-communion." From this testimony it appears, 1. That all ordinations of Presbyters, as well as Deacons, were performed by Bishops. 2. That the power of ordaining was so universally acknowledged to belong to Bishops, and to them only, that even the schismatics themselves observed the common rule. They would not, by departing from it, subject their ordinations to the charge of invalidity.

We have another proof of this point in *Cornelius'* letter to *Fabius*, Bishop of *Antioch*. He says, *Novatianus* was ordained a Presbyter, merely by the favour of the Bishop of *Rome* ; that all the clergy, and many of the people opposed it ; yet, notwithstanding, he ordained him ; promising, however, that he would not make a precedent of it.*

Thus, Sir, we have ample proof, that a Bishop, in the age of *St. Cyprian*, had the *sole* power of ordination.

There is another very important point, in which Bishops were superior to Presbyters, and that is,

* Euseb. Hist. lib. vi. c. 43.

the *supreme power of the keys*. No man could be admitted into the church, nor excommunicated, nor absolved, nor restored to communion, if the Bishop refused to concur. Neither could any ecclesiastical law be made, nor rescinded, nor dispensed with, without his consent. All discipline in the church depends upon the sacraments, and neither sacrament could be administered without authority and allowance from him. Of this we have full proof in the works of that holy martyr. Let one suffice.

It was a question much agitated in his day, whether baptism, performed by heretics, or schismatics, was valid. *St. Cyprian* maintained, that it was not. Now, Sir, consider his reasoning. “It is manifest,” says he, “where, and by whom, the remission of sins can be given, which is given in baptism. For our Lord gave first to *Peter*—that power, that *whatsoever he should loose on earth, should be loosed in heaven*; and after his resurrection, he gave it to his Apostles, when he said, *as my Father hath sent me*, &c. Whence we learn, that none can baptize authoritatively but the Bishops, and those who are founded in the evangelical law, and our Lord’s institution.—Further, dearest brother, we want not divine warrant for it, when we say, that God hath disposed all things by a certain law, and a proper ordinance; and that none can usurp any thing against the Bishops, all being subject to them. For *Corah, Dathan*, and

Abirām, attempted to assume to themselves a privilege of sacrificing against *Moses*, and *Aaron* the Priest, and they were punished for it, because it was unlawful.* Now, whatever you may think of the force of *Cyprian's* argument, that baptism, performed by heretics, or schismatics, was not valid, because not done by the Bishop, or with his allowance; certain it is, that he argues upon a universally received principle in his time, that none but Bishops, and those to whom they gave authority, had a right to baptize.—*Firmilian* has been already quoted to the same purpose. And *Fortunatus*, Bishop of *Thuchaboris*, in his suffrage at the council of *Carthage*, expressly says, “Jesus Christ, our Lord and God,—built his church upon a rock, and not upon heresy, and gave the power of baptizing to Bishops, and not to heretics, &c.”†—This also was the opinion of *Tertullian* and *Ignatius*, as we shall see in due time.

2. In the age of *Cyprian*, the Bishop had equal power with respect to the holy eucharist. No Presbyter, within his diocese, could administer it but in subordination to him. The testimonies to this purpose are too numerous to be repeated. Take two or three. In his sixteenth epistle, directed to his Presbyters and Deacons, he resents, in strong terms, the conduct of some of the former, who had admitted the lapsed to the eucharist without his

* Ep. 73.

† Con. Cart. suff. 17.

permission. "Such," says he, "deny me the honour of which, by divine right, I am possessed," &c. The 15th, 16th, and 17th epistles are to the same purpose. And in his 59th epistle, he has these words: "Is glory given to God when—Presbyters, contemning and trampling on their Bishops, should preach peace with deceiving words, and give the communion," &c.

I will add one testimony which relates to both the sacraments. It is in the 69th epistle, written to *Magnus*. His design is to represent the atrocious guilt of schism, and the wretched condition of schismatics. Amongst other arguments he uses the following. "*Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, were of the same religion of which *Moses* and *Aaron* were, and served the same God. But because they transgressed the limits of their own stations, and usurped a power of sacrificing, in opposition to *Aaron* the Priest, they were punished in a miraculous manner; neither could their sacrifices be valid or profitable.—Yet these men had made no schism: they had not departed from the tabernacle, nor raised another altar, which now the schismatics do," (meaning the *Novatians*) "who, deriding the church, and rebelling against peace and unity, are bold to constitute an [episcopal] chair, and assume to themselves a primacy, [an episcopal authority] and a power of baptizing, and offering," that is, of celebrating the holy eucharist.* More testimo-

* Ep. 69.

nies might be produced, but surely they are needless.

And now, having made it fully appear, that a Bishop in *St. Cyprian's* time presided over many Presbyters, and numerous congregations—that he was raised *to the top of the priesthood*, as the pious Bishop expresses himself, by a *new* ordination, his orders to the *Presbyterate* being insufficient—that he had the sole power of *ordaining* and *confirming*, and the *supreme* power of the keys, no Presbyter having the right to administer the sacraments but *in subordination* to him; it follows irresistibly, and beyond the least possibility of a reply, that a Bishop, in the third century, was superior in *dignity*, in *power*, in *order*, to a Presbyter. I have now nothing more to do, but to show that *St. Cyprian* and his contemporaries did believe this superiority of Bishops to be by *divine institution*. But with this I shall begin my next letter.

LETTER V.

REV. SIR,

I AM now to show, that *St. Cyprian* and his contemporaries, believed that Episcopacy, which has been fully proved to be *diocesan*, is a *divine institution*. One may fill a volume with testimonies to this purpose. Let a few suffice.

Cyprian, in his address to *Fortunatus*, says, that “the people are by *God* committed to the Bishop’s care.”* In his discourse, at the opening of the council at *Carthage*, he says, “that our Lord Jesus Christ, and he alone, has power of setting Bishops over the church to govern it.” He says to *Cornelius*, that “if the courage of Bishops be shaken, and they shall yield to the temerity of wicked schismatics, there will then be an end of the Episcopal authority, and the sublime and *divine power* of governing the church.”† And in the same epistle he says, that “Christ *constitutes*, as well as protects Bishops.” In his epistle to *Florentius Pupianus*, he says, that “it is God that makes Bishops,” and

* De Exhort. Martyr. p. 167.

† Ep. 59.

that "it is *by the divine appointment* a Bishop is set over the church."*

This, Sir, is but a small part of what might be produced; but I think it is quite sufficient to prove, that *Cyprian* believed Episcopacy to be a *divine institution*.

Let us now see what his contemporaries say. In the council of *Carthage*, which was holden in the year 256, *Fortunatus a Thuchabori*, *Venantius a Tinisa*, and *Clarus a Muscula*, expressly say, that "our Lord left the care of his spouse to the Bishops." And we may reasonably believe, that all the other Bishops of the council were of the same opinion with these three, and with *St. Cyprian*, their president, especially when we consider, that it is fully attested by other *African Synods*, as appears from their synodical epistles. Thus—The 57th among *St. Cyprian's*, is a synodical epistle, written by forty Bishops, in the year 252. In that, they consider themselves as *Christ's Generals*, having a *commission from heaven* to animate his soldiers under their command—as "the pastors to whom the sheep are instructed by the chief shepherd." The 61st seems to be another synodical epistle, congratulating *Lucius* upon his return to the *See of Rome*. In that, we have Bishops of *divine ordination*. The 67th was written by 37 Bishops, giving their resolution of the case proposed

* Ep. 66.

to them, concerning *Martialis*, and *Basilides*, two *Spanish* Bishops, who had *lapsed* in the persecution. Now the *divine* right of Episcopacy runs through the whole epistle. I will not give you the contents of it, but refer you to the epistle itself for your satisfaction. The 70th is another *synodical* epistle, signed by 32 Bishops, in which, they expressly say, that “it was by the divine vouchsafement, that they administered God’s priesthood in his church.” The 72d is another *synodical* epistle, written to *Stephen*, Bishop of *Rome*, in which it is expressly affirmed, that the Episcopal authority is of *divine appointment*; and that the *one Altar* (which is a figure for the Bishop’s communion) is *divine*; and that the setting up of *other Altars* in opposition to it, or independent on it, is to counteract a *divine ordinance*. Nothing can be more expressive of the belief of that council.

Here then we have the opinion of, perhaps, *all* the Bishops, certainly of a *great majority* of them, in *Mauritania* and *Numidia*, that Episcopacy is a *divine* institution; and, I think, nobody can, with any show of reason, doubt, that they were full as able to give a correct opinion upon this subject, as the same number of our adversaries are, in the present day. Had they given an opinion upon a point of doctrine, we should not be under any obligation to acquiesce in it, unless it was well supported by scripture proof upon sound principles of interpretation; but here is an opinion concerning a matter of

fact, which is the same as a testimony to that fact, that Christ, by his Apostles, did appoint an order of ministers in his church, superior to Presbyters ; and to that order was committed the government, in all spiritual matters, of both ministers and people.

To these testimonies from the *African* Bishops, may be added those of *Cornelius*, the clergy, and the people of *Rome*. Let us begin with the testimony of those *Roman Confessors*, who had joined in the schism of *Novatianus*, but soon became sensible of their fault, and returned to the communion of the church. *Cornelius*, satisfied of the sincerity of their penitence, convenes his Presbyters, before whom the associates of *Novatianus* make the following confession. " We know that *Cornelius* is chosen Bishop of this most holy catholic church, by the Omnipotent God, and by our Lord Christ: We confess our error. We have been imposed upon: We have been abused by treachery, and ensnaring talk. For we are not ignorant that there is *one God*, and *one Lord Christ*, whom we have confessed, and *one Holy Ghost* ; and that there ought to be but *one Bishop* in a catholic church."* This also was the belief of *Cornelius*, and all his clergy. We might fairly judge so, had we no particular evidence to the purpose ; but we need not depend upon conjecture, however reasonable : We have their positive

* Ep. 49. p. 92, 93.

testimony. *Cornelius*, in one of his epistles to *Fabius*, Bishop of *Antioch*, as recorded by *Eusebius*,* says expressly, that “*Novatianus* usurped, and by force, seized the Bishoprick, when it was not given him from above.” And the *Roman* Presbyters and Deacons were as fully persuaded, that Episcopacy was a divine institution. This appears from two letters written to *St. Cyprian*, during the vacancy in the *See* of *Rome*. In the one, having told him how far they had proceeded in the case of the *lapsed*, they say, that they can proceed no farther till *God shall give them a Bishop*.† In the other, their belief is fairly intimated. They tell *St. Cyprian*, how much his *vigour* in the administration of his Episcopal office, agreeably to the *evangelical discipline*, comforted them amidst their great pressures.‡ And with respect to the *lapsed*, they say, their best course would be “to excite the clemency of God by submission, and draw upon themselves the divine mercy, by giving due honour to *God’s priest*,” that is, the Bishop. Thus we have the sentiments of the Bishop and clergy of the church of *Rome*, when she was as pure a church as any upon earth.

Another testimony to this purpose, is that of *Alexander*, Bishop of *Jerusalem*. It was the general belief of that time, as we learn from *Eusebius*, that *Alexander* was made Bishop of that city by ex-

* Euseb. Hist. lib. vi. c. 43.

† Ep. 30.

‡ Ep. 36.

traordinary designation. The historian says,* It was God's special care for his church that did it: that there was something peculiar to God in the matter. *Alexander* himself believed it; he must, therefore, have believed the Episcopal office to be of divine appointment. This appears also from his congratulatory epistle to the church of *Antioch*, when *Asclepiades* was promoted to the chair of that diocese. He tells them, that "his bonds turned light and easy to him, when he heard that such an excellent person was made their Bishop by the special favour of God."† How, after this, can it be supposed, that *Alexander* did not believe that Episcopacy was a divine institution?

Alexander was as well qualified as any man then living, to determine what was the government of the church in the Apostolic age. It was about the year 212 that he was made coadjutor to *Narcissus*, in the See of *Jerusalem*. *Narcissus* was, at that time, aged 116 years, and, consequently, was born before the death of *St. John*. *Alexander*, then, must have had it from the mouth of *Narcissus*, what the government of the church was in the very age of the Apostles. I cannot conceive any thing more to the point, than the testimony of such a man.

The next person that I shall quote, as maintaining this opinion, was the learned *Origen*. He was born

* Eccles. Hist. lib. vi. p. 268.

† Ibid.

in the year 186, and for talents and literary acquirements, was not surpassed, if equalled by any one in his day. According to *Jerome*,* who was an excellent judge of literary merit, *Origen* was master of all the learning then existing, and thoroughly versed in the principles of the different sects of *Grecian* philosophers. This kind of knowledge, it must be confessed, led him astray from the simplicity of the Gospel. He maintained some tenets that were pretty generally condemned; but still, he was a great, and illustrious man.

This man, distinguished for his talents, learning, virtue, and piety, is intirely on our side of the question. He must have known perfectly well, what was the government of the church, not only in the early part of the third century, but also in the second, and at a very early period of it too; for his father *Leonidas*, who was a martyr to Christianity, and who was converted from Gentilism not many years after the death of the Apostle *John*, would not, we may be sure, fail to instruct him upon that subject. With such an advantage, and with such talents for research, *Origen* could have been at no loss to trace Episcopacy to its very source. In him, we find no hint of ministerial parity, no hint of a change of government. He speaks exactly as we do. Let us hear him.

In his twentieth homily on *St. Luke*, he has these

* Cat. Eccles. Scriptor.

words : “ If Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is subject to *Joseph* and *Mary*, shall not I be subject to the Bishop, who is of *God ordained* to be my father? Shall not I be subject to the Presbyter, who, by the divine vouchsafement, is set over me?” Here, the Bishop, as distinguished from the Presbyter, is said to be *ordained by God*; the Presbyter also, according to him, holds a divine commission; and this we most readily grant, and contend for. Again: In his book upon the subject of prayer, discoursing on the debts mentioned in the Lord’s prayer, after he has named the duties common to all Christians, he adds—“ Besides these, there is a debt peculiar to such as are widows maintained by the church. And there is a debt peculiar to Deacons; and another peculiar to Presbyters; but of all these peculiar debts, that which is due by the Bishop is the greatest. It is *exactd by the Saviour* of the whole church; and the Bishop must suffer severely for it, if it be not paid.”* More might be extracted from *Origen*; but surely this is quite enough.

I shall now conclude the testimonies of this century, with a few extracts from the *Apostolical canons*. These, you are pleased to say, are an *impudent forgery*. If your meaning be, that these canons were not made by the Apostles, you mean no more than what we are willing to allow. We say the

* See Pearson. Vind. Ignat. Epist. c. 11.

same thing. But if you mean to assert, that they were not compiled till a late age of the church, say the fifth or sixth century, you stand condemned by almost all the *learned*. *Daille* contended that they were not compiled till the fifth century; but he has been completely refuted by Bishop *Beveridge*. Even *Blondel*, who had no more reason to be pleased with those canons than you have, acknowledges, that they were published as early as the year 280. This is too late, but let it be so. They will then bear complete testimony to the practice of the church, in the third century.

I do not introduce the subject of these canons, because I stand in need of their assistance; but to show that you are *incautious* in calling them an *impudent forgery*, unless you mean as already explained. I also wish to have an opportunity of giving our readers a summary view of *Beveridge's* able defence of these canons. I cannot possibly suppose that you have ever read that defence; for then, I must think, that you would have been more modest in giving your opinion. Dogmatical assertions, I can assure you, Sir, will not do with us: Every thing must be brought to the test of fact, reason, and sound criticism. Let us see now, whether those canons can be defended upon these solid grounds.

Bishop *Beveridge*, in his able defence, which is published in *Cotelerius' Apostolical Fathers*, maintains this opinion, that the canons now in question,

are the decrees of Synods in the second and third centuries, collected at different times, and by different persons. This he proves from the testimonies of *Athanasius* and *Basil* of the fourth century, and from the decrees of several councils of that age.

1. The *Nicene council*. He shows that the 9th, 10th, 15th, and 16th canons of that council, are transcripts of the 14th, 15th, 61st, and 62d of the *Apostolical* canons. But it may be said, that, perhaps, the *latter* are transcripts of the *former*. This *supposition* he intirely destroys, by showing, that the style of the *Apostolical*, is more simple than that of the *Nicene* canons; and from that circumstance, which is generally admitted by sound critics, he infers the earlier date of the *former*. But what decisively proves it to be so, is, that the word *Metropolitan* was first used by the *Nicene* council, and is never to be found in the *Apostolic canons*: that *dignity* indeed, that *primus inter pares* is to be found there, but not the title *Metropolitan*. And let me add, what he has not observed, that the testimony of *Athanasius* and *Basil* proves the greater antiquity of the *Apostolical canons*; for if they were transcripts, in the instances mentioned, of the *Nicene canons*, those writers could not possibly have been ignorant of it. The Bishop next proves the superior antiquity of the *Apostolic* canons, from those of the council of *Antioch*. That council met in the year 341, sixteen years after that of *Nice*. He gives the following view of the corresponding

canons—corresponding not only in the matter, but nearly in the words.

Canons	
of <i>Antioch</i>	<i>Apostolical</i>
1	7
2	8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
3	15, 16
4	28
5	31
6	32
7, 8	33
9	34
12, 13	35
17, 18	36
20	27
21	14
23	76
24	40
25	41

The Bishop proves also, that the *Apostolical canons* were published before the fourth century, from the canons of the councils of *Gangræna*, *Constantinople*, *Carthage*, and *Ephesus*, which were holden in that century. Further:—After observing, that the *Apostolical canons* were sometimes styled *Ecclesiastical*, he adduces proofs from a number of writers in the fourth and fifth centuries, in favour of our side of this question. 1. From a letter written by *Alexander*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, to *Alexander*, Bishop of *Constantinople*, which letter is preserved

in the Ecclesiastical history of *Theodoret*. That letter was written before the meeting of the *Nicene council*. The *Apostolical canons* are particularly named, and a reference evidently made to the twelfth canon. You have the *Greek* of both canons translated into *Latin*, at the bottom of the page.*

The Bishop quotes in favour of his point, a testimony from the emperor *Constantine*, preserved by *Eusebius*; and in the fifth century the testimony of the emperor *Theodosius*; and in the beginning of the sixth, that of the learned emperor *Justinian*, that of *John*, Bishop of *Antioch*, and also the testimonies of the synod of *Trullo*, and of the second *Nicene council*. Thus, abundance of evidence has been given to prove, that the *Apostolical canons* are of very high antiquity; published, at the lowest, in the third century; and are an exact representation of the government, rules, and practices of the primitive church, in the second and third ages. And now, I leave our readers to judge, whether you were prudent in pronouncing them to be an “impudent forgery.”

As to the *Apostolic constitutions*, I shall not con-

* Unde fit ut nonnulli literis eorum subscribentes, in Ecclesiam eos recipiant, cum tamen comministis nostris, qui hoc ausi suat, gravissima, ut opinor, reprehensioni immineat infamia, eo quod nec Apostolicus canon id permittit. Apud Theod. Eccles. Hist. lib. i. c. 14

Apost. Can. 12th runs thus.—Si quis Clericus vel Laicus segregatus, vel non recipiendus, discedens in altera urbe receptus fuerit absque literis commendatitiis, segregetur et qui, et qui receptus est.

cern myself about them; because they were not published till after the time, when, all acknowledge that *diocesan Episcopacy* prevailed. But I shall make use of the *Apostolical canons*, to which I have an unquestionable right, till you refute Bishop *Beveridge's* masterly defence of them.

- Canon 1. Let a Bishop be consecrated by two or three Bishops. Canon 2. Let a Presbyter and Deacon be ordained by one Bishop.—Here the power of ordination is lodged in one person, the Bishop, and not in the Presbytery. Canon 15. If any Presbyter, or Deacon, shall leave his own parish, and go to another, without the Bishop's leave, he shall officiate no longer; especially, if he obey not the Bishop when he exhorts him to return, persisting in his insolence and disorderly behaviour; but he shall be reduced to communicate only as a layman. Canon 32. If any Presbyter, despising his own Bishop, shall gather congregations apart, and erect another altar, his Bishop not being convicted of wickedness, or irreligion; let him be deposed as an ambitious person: And likewise, such other clergy, or laity, who shall join themselves to him, shall be excommunicated. Canon 39. Let the Presbyters, or Deacons, do nothing without the consent of the Bishop.—This is in perfect conformity with the injunction of *Ignatius*.

Canon 55. If any clergyman shall reproach, or revile his Bishop, let him be deposed; for “thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.”

Exod. xxii. 28. The same distinction of offices runs through all these canons.

And now, Sir, I may safely assert, that if any matter of fact is capable of being proved; if any matter of fact has actually been proved; it is, that *diocesan* Episcopacy was the government of the church in the third century.

We are now prepared to examine what you have to oppose to this great mass of clear, decisive, uncontrovertible evidence.

First—You quote a passage from *St. Cyprian's* third epistle, “whence we understand, that it is lawful for none but the *Presidents* of the church to baptize, and grant remission of sins.” Pray, Sir! Are not the Bishops *Presidents* of the churches which they govern? Can any title be more appropriate? Do they not *preside* in all conventions of their clergy? You certainly could not be in earnest when you quoted this passage. Your argument stands unparalleled for logical accuracy. I have tried, for some time, to make a syllogism of it: I believe I have succeeded at last. It will run thus:

A diocesan Bishop presides over both the clergy and laity of all the churches within his diocese.

A Presbyterian president presides over no clergy, but only over the laity of one congregation.

Therefore, a Presbyterian president, and diocesan Bishop, are the same officers.

I have not skill enough to determine to what

mood and figure this syllogism belongs ; but perhaps you, Sir, can settle the point.

But if you could possibly have been at any loss, what kind of *president Cyprian* means, had you read a little farther in the epistle, you could easily have satisfied yourself. It was that kind of *president* who administered *confirmation*. Speaking of *Peter* and *John*, who confirmed the disciples at *Samarina*, *Cyprian* observes : “ This is our practice, with regard to such persons as are baptized in our church ; who are brought before the presidents, and so by our prayer and imposition of hands, receive the Holy Ghost.” This has been proved from *Cyprian* to be the prerogative of *diocesan* Bishops. *St. Jerome* also tells you so ; and founds that prerogative upon the holy scriptures. I hope you will not dispute *his* authority, whosoever else you may.

You go on, Ep. 67. “ The people should not flatter themselves, that they are free from fault, when they communicate with a sinful *Priest*, and give their consent to the *presidency* of a wicked Bishop,” &c. I omit the remainder of the quotation, because it is long, and amounts to nothing more than this, that *Cyprian* calls a Bishop a *Priest*, three or four times. Well, Sir, I hope you do not mean to deny that a Bishop is of the *sacerdotal* order ; but if you mean to infer from that, that he is on a level with a *Presbyter*, I should not much ap-

plaud the correctness of your inference. *Aaron* the *High Priest* is called a *Priest* repeatedly; indeed, most commonly; therefore, *Aaron* was no *High Priest*.—Strange logic!

It appears to me to be a total waste of time, to reply to such—what shall I call them?—*nothings*.

You should, Sir, have told your *Christian brethren*, that the epistle from which you made your extract, was a *synodical* one, written by thirty-seven Bishops, and not a *Presbyter* among them, upon a very important occasion—the lapse of two *Spanish Bishops*, *Basilides* and *Martialis*; and that it was addressed “to their brethren in the Lord, the *Presbyter Felix*, and to the people dwelling at *Legio* and *Asturica*, as likewise to the *Deacon Lalius*, and to the people dwelling at *Emerita*.”—You should have told them this, and then, perhaps, they could have determined, whether, after such an enumeration of the orders of the church, a Bishop’s being called a *Priest* proves him not to hold the highest grade in the priesthood—*Sacerdotii fastigium*, which very expression would settle the point, were there not a hundred other considerations to put it beyond the possibility of doubt.

But you have given your readers this quotation, principally, I presume, to show, that in the time of *Cyprian*, a Bishop was chosen by the people; and thence you infer, in the face of complete evidence to the contrary, that a Bishop presided over no more than a single congregation. But whether your

premise be true or not, the inference has no necessary connection with it. A Bishop may be chosen by the people, and yet he may preside over a hundred congregations. I shall not, therefore, enter into the dispute about the mode of electing a Bishop, but refer you to the *Vindication of the Principles of the Cyprianic Age*,* in which you will find a complete refutation of the notion, that, in that age a Bishop was elected by the people. The author demonstrates, that the people had no other concern in the business, than to bear testimony to the character of the Bishop elect, and that the election was made by the Bishops of the province, without any thing like a *polling* on the part of the people. In the next age, after Christianity was established, I allow, that the people in *some* places, assumed the power of electing the Bishop; but the effects of it became so dreadful, particularly at *Rome*, that the Emperor found it absolutely necessary to deprive them of that power.

Your next quotation does really surprise me. I do not know what to think—what to make of your management of this controversy. Mr. *M'Leod*, I thought, deserved to stand first on the list of writers, who quote texts of scripture that have no more connection with the subject, than with the doctrine of the *transmigration of souls*; but you not only quote authorities that do not make for your

* From p. 392 to 436.

purpose, but that are directly in point to *ours*. Thus, Ep. 32. "Through all the vicissitudes of time, the ordination of Bishops, and the constitution of the church, are so handed down, that the church is built on the Bishops, and every act of the church is ordered and managed by them. Seeing, therefore, this is founded on the law of God, I wonder that some should be so rash and insolent, as to write to me in the name of the church, seeing a church consists of a *Bishop, Clergy*, and all that stand faithful"—that is, a church, let the number of congregations of which it may be composed be ever so many, must be under the presidency of a Bishop with his clergy, otherwise it is no church. And is this *parochial* Episcopacy?

But I suppose your design was to show your readers, that the mode of expression, a *church*, not *churches*, implied no more than a *single* congregation, and then the Bishop would be snugly seated at the head of it. But what use would there be of a number of clergymen to a single congregation? Of forty-six, for instance, at *Rome*? Of eight, at least, at *Carthage*? "Why, some of these were *ruling Elders*." What! some of these clergymen! Remember, that *Cyprian* uses the word *clergy*—*clericos*. But your *ruling Elders*, by your own account, are not clergymen. In short, there is not a shadow of proof, that there were any such creatures at *Rome* or *Carthage*.

Besides, when *the church* of a city is spoken of,

it is always mentioned, throughout the scriptures, in the singular number, let the number of congregations be ever so many; but when the churches of a whole province are mentioned, it is always in the plural number. Thus, *the church of Jerusalem*—*the church of Antioch*—*the church of Sardis*—*the church of Ephesus*—*the church of Pergamus*; but when of a whole province, it is the churches of *Judea*—the churches of *Asia*—the churches of *Syria* and *Cilicia*—the churches of *Galatia*—the churches of *Macedonia*—just as many churches as there were cities, in which were Bishops presiding over clergy and laity, let their numbers be ever so great. And we have uncontrollable evidence from antiquity, that as Christians multiplied in the neighbouring towns and villages, that they were all annexed to the Bishop of the city, as far as the civil jurisdiction of that city extended.

Your next quotation is from *Tract. de Unitat. Eccles.* “Our Lord speaks to *Peter*, *I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, &c.* Upon one he builds his church; and though he gave an equal power to all his Apostles, yet that he might manifest unity, he ordered the beginning of that unity to proceed from one person. The rest of the Apostles were the same that *Peter* was, being endued with the same *both of honour and power*. But the beginning proceeds from unity, that the church may be shown to be one.” Well, Sir, what is to be deduced from all

this? That *Cyprian* considered Bishops and *preaching* Presbyters as of the *same order*? The only distinction between them, you say, is that “of *president* or *chairman* among them.” Now, Sir, if I have not demolished this notion of *parity* by the evidence I have given, that a Presbyter was raised to the episcopate by a *new* ordination; that, in consequence, he presided over all orders and ranks in the church—that he had the *sole* power of ordination—the *sole* power of confirmation—that he had the *supremacy* of the keys—that none could baptize, or administer the eucharist, or absolve penitents, that is, restore them to the communion of the church, without his authority; if, I say, I have not demolished the notion of parity by the evidence I have produced for these points, then it is impossible to prove any thing that does not admit of mathematical demonstration. History of every kind must be given up; no facts that have not occurred under our own eyes, can be substantiated; we may talk of past events, and of forms of governments in days of yore, but they are all dreams; fictions of the fancy, which no sober man will ever believe: Nay, our very Bible must be given up; for we know not, upon this principle, who wrote it, nor when it was written, nor when the parts were compiled into one *sacred canon*, nor do we know that there were any miracles ever wrought, nor that any prophecies were ever uttered. But I hope there are many who will not subscribe to this extravagance; who will be con-

vinced from the evidence adduced, that *Cyprian* held no such opinion as you would ascribe to him.

The quotation that you have given us, does not convey the least hint of parity between Bishops and Presbyters; but it positively asserts an equality, both in *honour* and *power*, between *Peter* and the rest of the Apostles. They were all perfectly equal; and, as *Cyprian* repeatedly asserts, that Bishops are the *successors* of the Apostles, it follows, with strict logical propriety, that there is not, as he speaks, any *Bishop of Bishops*. This is the very argument which *Cyprian* uses to prove, that the Bishops of *Rome* had not the least authority over other Bishops; and nothing could be more to his purpose. It is the very argument which Protestant Episcopalians use to demolish the *Pope's supremacy*. But it seems you are content, if you can get any shadow of argument against us, to allow *Peter* some superiority over the other Apostles. He must be, at least, the *president* or *chairman* of the Apostolic Presbytery, according to your mode of reasoning; for unless he be, he can be no type of the Bishop, who, you say, is the *president* or *chairman* among his clergy. This must be the point of similitude, otherwise there is none at all. But what, Sir, put it into your mind, that *Peter* was the *chairman* of the Apostolic college? Did *Cyprian*? No hint of that sort in him. Do the other Fathers of the first three centuries say so? Nothing like it. Do the scriptures? He must be sharp sighted that can

find it. Does it appear to be so from the account we have of the council of *Jerusalem*? Quite otherwise. *St. James* appears to have been the president of that council; and for no other reason, that we can conceive, but his being Bishop of that city. What, then, can be the ground of this notion? Is it the circumstance of his receiving his commission before the other Apostles? *Cyprian* knew that he did so; but notwithstanding, he asserts the equality of the other Apostles. All the use he makes of that circumstance is by way of *illustration*, not of *strict reasoning*. He does not infer from it *Peter's* superiority, but uses it merely as a circumstance illustrative of the unity of the church. This liberty of alluding to texts of scripture, from which no conclusive proof is intended, was very common among the Fathers, and *Cyprian* very frequently uses it. He evidently proceeds here upon an allusion to the *singular* number; because Christ commissioned *Peter* in the first instance; but in his 33d epistle he expressly asserts, that the church is founded upon Bishops in the *plural* number. After citing *Peter's* commission, he says, "From thence, in a regular succession downwards, we date the ordination of Bishops, and the course of ecclesiastical administrations, so as that we understand the church to be settled upon her Bishops; and every public act of hers to be managed by them." Now, Sir, is it not really very weak, to infer from a mere *fanciful* allusion to the singular number, in order to give some sort of illus-

tration to the principle that the church is but *one*, that *Peter* was at the head of the Apostolic college, as a *primus inter pares*, and that, therefore, a Bishop is no more in the Presbytery? This inference is altogether gratuitous, and the premise, from a *Protestant*, is perfectly astonishing. I am sorry to find, Sir, that you reason, or make *Cyprian* reason, precisely as the Papists do, with respect to *Peter*. I am sorry to perceive this glance at *Rome*. *Principiis obsta* is a wise maxim. I hope we shall all be governed by it.*

You appear to me, Sir, to be apprehensive that your inference is not very tenable; and for that reason, I suppose it is, that you have pressed *Dodwell* into your service. That learned man, you inform us, “makes *Peter* the type of every Bishop, and the rest of the Apostles the type of every Presbyter.” I am really astonished, and to tell you the truth, not a little displeased at your method of quoting authors. Am I to look through all the works of *Dodwell* for what you ascribe to him? If you took the quotation immediately from him, (which I very much doubt) why did you not note the book, and the page? Surely it was very easy to do it. Whatever, Sir, you may think of the matter, I believe every candid reader will agree with me, that you are not entitled to any answer when you quote in this manner. However, as my patience is

* See Dr. M.’s third Letter, p. 79. The note at the bottom of the page savours pretty strongly of the *old leaven*.

not yet exhausted, I have carefully looked into those writings of *Dodwell* which are in my hands. These, I acknowledge, are not all his writings. I have none but his *Cyprianic Dissertations*, his book on *Schism*, and his *Reply to Baxter*. I have also, *his Life by Brokesby*. In that, I see nothing for your purpose; but I found in it, what I thought a probable clue to your quotation. I immediately turned to *Dodwell's seventh Cyprianic Dissertation*, in which he reasons strenuously against the Papists, who found the supremacy of the *Pope* upon the commission given to *Peter*. By consulting that *Dissertation*, I found that you have not fairly represented *Dodwell's* sentiments upon that point. He asserts, that the declaration of *Christ* to *Peter*, in consequence of the noble confession he had made, did confer a particular honour upon him, but no degree of power, or authority, above the other Apostles—that they were all equal by their commission; but that he, *ut inter pares unus tamen reliquis emineret*—that is, that he, as an equal in power, shone with superior splendour. He further thinks, as *Cyprian* does, that our *Saviour's* declaration to *Peter* prior to his commissioning the other Apostles, was a circumstance intended to point out the unity of the church,—*non id sine certa arcanoque consilio a servatore esse factum*. But he argues strenuously against the Papists, for founding the *Pope's* supremacy upon this honorary circumstance. He shows, that all the Apostles were in-

vested with equal authority, and that there is *no Bishop of Bishops*, as *Cyprian* speaks. He maintains, that as *unity* began with *Peter*, so it was afterwards extended to the whole college of Apostles, to whom the Bishops succeeded, and became the principle of unity to the whole church. He asserts, that as *unity* began with *one*, that is, with *Peter*, so it is continued with *one*, that is, with the *one* Bishop of a diocese. In this respect, he thinks *Peter* was a type of every Bishop ; but he no where says, that the Bishop was no more than *primus inter pares*, or that the rest of the Apostles were types of the Presbyters. He does not mention the Presbyters at all, nor give the least hint that he thought him equal, either in order, or in degree, with the Bishop. Nor indeed could he, without the most palpable inconsistency. His well known doctrine is, that the Bishops *are* in the *Christian*, what the High Priest *was* in the *Jewish* church ; and that the Presbyters of the *former*, correspond with the Priests of the *latter*. He maintains, that Bishops are of a superior order to Presbyters, by being invested with the sole power of ordination and confirmation, and with a supremacy in the government of the church ; and that this superiority is by *divine institution*. That this was *Dodwell's* doctrine you will soon be convinced, if you will look into his *Cyprianic Dissertations*, and his *Discourse concerning the one Priesthood and the one Altar*. I will give you one quotation from the *latter*, without subjecting you to the trouble of reading

almost the whole book, before you find it. It is near the close, p. 388. "Is not," says he, "the Bishop as apt as ever to signify a *principle of unity*, and to represent *God* and *Christ* under the notion of a *head*? Nay, does not his *Monarchical Presidency* over his brethren of the clergy, peculiarly fit him for such a signification? And does he not the more naturally represent *God* and *Christ* in the notion of a head, by how much he is more like in their *monarchy*, I mean over that particular body, over which Bishops were at first placed by *divine institution*? Or do they think them less of *divine institution now* than *formerly*?" I refer you also to the 9th chapter of the same book, the title of which is, *The Christian Bishops were answerable to the Jewish High Priests*.

We have, for the present, said enough about *Dodwell*; and from what has been said, it will, I think, appear to every impartial reader, that you have either taken what you have ascribed to him, upon trust; or if you have read any of his works, that you have greatly mistaken his meaning, and, consequently, greatly misrepresented him.

Your next and last quotation from *Cyprian*, is as much in your favour as the preceding. Ep. 3. "The Deacons ought to remember, that the Lord hath chosen Apostles, that is, Bishops and Presidents; but the Apostles constituted Deacons, as the ministers of their Episcopacy, and of the church."

Now, I think it would puzzle any man living to

perceive in this passage, the least appearance of presbyterian parity. Where does it lie? In what words? In what circumstance? In what intimation? I am totally at a loss to perceive it; but I am at no loss to perceive, that *Cyprian* makes the Bishops the successors of the Apostles, and Episcopacy, such as he himself held, to be of *divine* institution. I can also perceive, by reading a little farther on, that *Cyprian* says, "You will make a very proper use of your Episcopal authority, either by deposing, or excommunicating him, [the Deacon complained of] as you shall find most expedient." This, *Rogatianus*, to whom the epistle was addressed, could do by virtue of his Episcopal authority. He did not want the aid of the people, nor of *ruling* Elders, nor even of *preaching* Elders. He could do it alone, if he thought proper. This, I think, looks very much like Episcopal pre-eminence.

You sum up the evidence, which the preceding quotations afford against *diocesan* Episcopacy, in the following triumphant manner: "These extracts are remarkable. Though they are precisely those which Episcopalians generally adduce from *Cyprian* in support of their cause, the discerning reader [the *discerning*! Aye—there lies the emphasis] will perceive, that all their force lies against that cause." Now, Sir, I do not perceive, that in the great mass of evidence which I have given for *diocesan* Episcopacy, that I have made use of *one*

of these extracts; although I might have used them all with propriety. Your intimation, therefore, that these extracts are the only, or the principal dependence of Episcopalians, shows, either that you do not know what we have to say; or that, knowing it, you were not ingenuous enough to produce it. I suppose the first part of the alternative to be the truth; for I never will admit any thing that bears hard upon your integrity. And what a strange thing is it, for a man to undertake a controversy, when he does not know the whole of the evidence his opponents can bring against him. Even the great number of quotations that I have made, and which are so pointed, so uncontrollable, are not a quarter part of what I might have made; and there is also a variety of topics, from which powerful arguments might be raised, such as no man ever *has*, or ever *can* answer, that I have entirely omitted, merely for the sake of brevity. But whoever wishes to see them handled in a masterly manner, may consult Bishop *Sage's Cyprianic Age*, and the *Vindication* of it.

You go on: "It is evident from these extracts, that *Bishop* and *President* are used by this Father as words of the same import."—So we say too—the Bishop, presiding over both clergy and people. A Presbyter, also, *may* be styled *President*, in an inferior sense, as he presides over his own congregation. But *Cyprian*, I believe, generally uses the word *Prepositus*, *President*, to signify a Bishop.

And what a curious circumstance it is, to make this an argument against *diocesan* Episcopacy, without first proving that *parochial* was the government of the church. Whichsoever was the fact, the appellations *Bishop* and *President* must be understood accordingly.

You proceed: "The officer thus denominated was the only one who had the power of administering baptism." There is nothing that looks like *that* in all the writings of *Cyprian*. His doctrine was perfectly the same with that of *Ignatius*,—that the Bishop had the *chief*, but not the *sole* power of the keys. None could baptize and administer the eucharist without his authority. This is every where apparent in *Cyprian*; and this *superior* power of the keys, upon which all discipline is founded, is an invincible argument against *parity*; and, as such, I have urged it in this controversy.

But as there is nothing like matter of fact to convince the generality of readers, I would observe, that *Tertullian*, who had been a Presbyter of the church of *Carthage* some years before *Cyprian*, says, that Deacons had a right to baptize, when given them by the Bishop. Now, we may be sure from this testimony, that this was the fact in that church; and, consequently, that the Bishop's power of the keys was not *sole*, but *supreme*.

Further you say: "The Bishop in *Cyprian*'s days was chosen by the people of his charge." If he were, it does not at all affect *diocesan* Episcopacy;

but, as I have already observed, try your hand upon Bishop *Sage*, who has pretty amply discussed that point. The Bishop “was ordained over a *particular flock*.” You mean over a *single* congregation. The contrary has been demonstrated—“And received his ordination in the *presence of that flock*.” That might very well be—all that chose attended, no doubt; and those who did, received every possible accommodation. In no other sense can we conceive, that a Bishop was ordained in the presence of his flock, when that flock consisted of many thousands, as I have fully proved was the case at *Carthage*.

Your other inferences are so much of a piece with the foregoing, that it is not worth while to consider them. Let our readers compare them with the proofs I have given, that *diocesan* Episcopacy was the government of the church in the third century, and then judge for themselves. I am perfectly willing to leave the decision to every impartial mind.

I shall just notice, before I conclude this letter, your unfounded assertion, that *Cyprian* repeatedly calls Presbyters his *colleagues*. Now, Sir, I, on the contrary, assert, that he never *once* calls them his colleagues. He sometimes, indeed, calls them his *fellow-presbyters*, and this is frequently done by Bishops in our day. The same condescending language is very common among military men. A General frequently addresses even common soldiers, in the familiar style of, *fellow-soldiers*. But how

ridiculous would it be to infer from this, that the soldiers and their General are colleagues. Just so ridiculous is the inference, that *Cyprian* and his Presbyters were equal, because he sometimes calls them his *fellow-presbyters*. His colleagues he never calls them.

I will conclude this *letter* in the words of *Dodwell*. Speaking upon this point, he says, *Cyprian* appropriates the word *colleagues* to Bishops, and plainly intimates, that Presbyters were entirely excluded from that *college*.*

* Dissert. Cyp. 10. p. 200. Et quidem ita propriam facit Episcopis ut collegas Presbyteris opponat, &c.

LETTER VI.

REV. SIR,

IN my last, I finished a pretty long list of testimonies from the writings of *St. Cyprian*, and proved, I am persuaded, beyond the possibility of refutation, that he and all his contemporaries did believe and assert the divine institution of Episcopacy. I also considered three or four passages which you adduce from that Father, to which you give a very surprizing gloss, and which does not display your usual ingenuity; for Episcopacy still shines in them, notwithstanding your efforts to obscure it. I shall now close the evidence from the *Cyprianic* period, by considering your quotation from *Firmilian*, Bishop of *Cesarea*.

In an epistle addressed to *Cyprian*, *Firmilian* thus speaks—"But the other heretics also, if they separate from the church, can have no power, or grace, since all power and grace are placed in the church, where *Elders* preside, in whom is vested the power of baptizing, and imposition of hands, and ordination." You add, "this passage needs no comment. It not only represents the right to *baptize*, and the right to *ordain*, as going

together ; but it also expressly ascribes both to the *Elders* who preside in the churches."

" This needs no comment !"—Concise enough, to be sure ! But there are some of your readers, who will, I hope, venture to think for themselves. To such I address the following observations.

1. *Firmilian* was a very distinguished Bishop, and contemporary with *Cyprian*, from whose works we have extracted such a body of evidence, that Bishops, in his day, were an order superior to Presbyters, as cannot possibly be controlled. 2. *Firmilian* appears to have been perfectly of the same mind with *Cyprian*, in all matters relating to the discipline and government of the church, as any one may see, who will read the whole of the 75th epistle. 3. *Firmilian* was the disciple of *Origen* ; and we have seen that *he* asserted the divine institution of Episcopacy. From these considerations we have strong ground to presume, that *Firmilian* had the same sentiments with respect to Episcopacy, that all his contemporaries had.

But what amounts to more than presumptive evidence, *Firmilian*, in this very letter, explains what he means by Elders. " How is this," says he, " that when we see *Paul* baptized his disciples again after *John's* baptism, we should make any doubt of baptizing them who return from heresy to the church, after that unlawful and prophane baptism of theirs, unless *Paul* was less than these Bishops, of whom we are speaking now, that these

indeed might give the Holy Ghost by imposition of hands alone, but *Paul* was insufficient for it." Now we see of what kind of Elders *Firmilian* was speaking; it was expressly the Bishops, to whom belonged the supreme power of baptism, confirmation, and ordination. It has been made as clear as any matter of fact can be made, that Bishops, in the age of *Cyprian*, were the supreme ministers of the sacraments, and the sole ministers of confirmation and ordination; and *Firmilian's* ascribing these powers to Elders, would prove decisively to every impartial person, that by them he meant Bishops, even if he had not said so himself; but when he calls those who were to lay their hands upon the returning heretics, by the appropriate name of Bishops, such Bishops as *he* and *Cyprian* were—there cannot be the shadow of a doubt remaining. And here let me add, that when the appellative *Bishop* is used by the writers of the third century, it is always used in the appropriate sense; and Presbyters are never called Bishops, as has been fully proved by *Pearson* and *Dodwell*.* I will give you another quotation from the 75th epistle, which will answer the double purpose of strengthening the above proofs, if they need it, and of showing *Firmilian's* coincidence of opinion with *Cyprian* and the other *African* Bishops, and with his master *Origen*, in regard to the

* *Pearson's Dissert.* and *Dodwell in Pearson's Dissert. prima de succes. prim. R. Epis. chap. ix. p. 97. 4to.*

divine institution of *diocesan* Episcopacy. After showing from scripture, that the church was founded upon *Peter* and the other Apostles, he says, “where we may observe, that the power of remitting sins was granted to the Apostles, and to those churches which they, when sent forth by Christ, formed and founded, and to those Bishops who *succeeded them in a due, and regular course of vicarious* ordination. Under what other notion can we, therefore, consider these adversaries of the one catholic church, whereof we are members, these enemies of ours, of us I say, *who are successors to the Apostles,*” &c. Here *Firmilian* declares himself, and *Cyprian*, and the other Bishops of his time—Bishops in the appropriate sense of the word—Bishops, who had many Presbyters, and many congregations under them—Bishops, who had the supreme power of the keys, and the sole power of confirmation and ordination; he declares, I say, these *diocesan* Bishops to be the *successors of the Apostles*, holding by vicarious ordination, the very commission which they held; and then, by irresistible consequence, diocesan Episcopacy is a divine institution. If any man can now doubt what sort of Presbyters or Elders *Firmilian* speaks of, all I have to say is, that he has the power of doubting entirely at his own disposal.

I am really, Sir, astonished, that such a man as you are, should give into that puerility of catching at every passage of the ancient writers in which

Bishops are styled Presbyters, when you very well know, that the High Priest is generally styled Priest, and that a Bishop is a Presbyter, as the greater implies the less. If you can produce any passages from the writers of the third century (I confine myself to that at present), in which a Presbyter is styled Bishop, it would be something in your favour ; but I believe you will search long enough for those passages.

I shall now close the testimonies of the third century with the usual quotations from *Tertullian*, who, as you justly observe, “ began to flourish about the year 200.” As he was converted to Christianity twenty-five years before that period, he is a good witness for the government of the church, both in the beginning of the third century, and in the latter part of the second. Let it also be remembered, that he was a Presbyter of the church of *Carthage*, but never attained the Episcopal dignity. He was greatly admired for his extensive learning, by *St. Cyprian*, who always called him his master. We may, therefore, very reasonably suppose, that *Cyprian* and he did not differ in the article of church government. Towards the close of his life, indeed, he fell into the errors of the *Montanists*, and there the orthodox Bishop of *Carthage* left him.

The quotation which you have given from *Tertullian*, I claim for Episcopacy. It has been proved from *Origen*, that in the early part of the third century, diocesan Episcopacy prevailed in the

church. Indeed, all the testimonies I have produced from the different writers of that age, prove the same thing; for it is ridiculous to talk of any change a few years before those men lived, when they so positively, so repeatedly, and so unanimously, found Episcopacy upon Apostolic institution. *Tertullian*, we shall find, bears his testimony to the same thing in the following passages: "The chief or highest Priest, who is the Bishop, has the right of giving baptism, and after him, the Presbyters and Deacons, but not without the Bishop's authority."—Now, what would a man who has no hypothesis to maintain, think and say of this passage? Certainly he would say—here, it is evident, that *Tertullian* speaks of an order, or grade, to which he gives the title of High Priest and Bishop, and which, of consequence, from the very title, must be possessed of powers superior, not only to those of the Deacon, but also of the Presbyter. And this is not only implied in the title, but the writer also gives an instance of the superiority of the Bishop, in ascribing to him, as its source, all the power which the inferior orders have to baptize; and the same must be true also, of whatever other powers they are possessed. Now, if this be not the meaning of *Tertullian*, then I do declare, that I have not intellect enough to discover the meaning of as plain a passage as ever was written. This, too, is exactly the language, and precisely the sentiment of *Cyprian* and his contemporaries, as has

been proved *ad satietatem*. They all ascribe to the Bishop the supremacy of the keys, or sacraments, and all the power which the inferior orders exercise in the church; and the Bishop's power they ascribe to the Apostolical commission, and that commission to Christ; and thus they make out the divine institution of Episcopacy. And this, I aver, was the universal opinion, so far as the records of antiquity inform us, from the first foundation of the Christian church; as I hope to make appear in due time.

Now, Sir, what have you to say to this quotation? Reader! hear it, and be astonished. "The highest Priest might have been the *standing Moderator* of the Presbytery"—"*The standing Moderator!*" Whence did that language come? Not from the primitive church, certainly. No—It came from *Geneva*. Pray, Sir, has a *Moderator* among you the supreme power of the keys? Do the members of your Presbytery derive the power of administering the sacraments from him? Can they not administer them but in subordination to him? How strikingly preposterous is it to suppose your *Moderator*, if he were even to hold his office for life, would answer to *Tertullian's* High Priest, or Bishop? All the essential traits of character in the *latter*, are totally wanting in the *former*. This *conceit*, therefore, will answer no purpose but to excite contempt.

Another testimony from *Tertullian*, is the fol-

lowing: "Let us see what milk the *Corinthians* drew from *Paul*, by what rule the *Galatians* were reclaimed, what the *Philippians*, *Thessalonians*, and *Ephesians* read, what, likewise, our neighbour *Romans* say, to whom both *Peter* and *Paul* left the gospel sealed with their blood.—We have also churches founded by *John*,* for though *Marcion* rejects his *Apocalypse*, yet the order or succession of Bishops, when traced up to its original, will be found to have *John* for its author," in the churches which he planted.

In this passage, *Tertullian* asserts that *St. John* founded churches, and that he ordained Bishops for them—such Bishops as existed at the close of the second century—who were the High Priests of the church, the supreme dispensers of the sacraments, which even Presbyters could not administer without their authority, and in subordination to them, and who, consequently, were the supreme governors of the churches:—such Bishops, and not that *modern manufacture*, *standing Moderators*, did *St. John* establish in all the churches which he founded. If any thing can be more decisive than this, I know not what it is. Let it also be constantly kept in mind, that I have produced a chain of evidence for diocesan Episcopacy, from the latter end of the fourth century, up to the beginning

* Habemus et Joannis alumnas ecclesias: Nam etsi Apocalypsim ejus Marcion respuit, ordines tamen episcoporum ad originem recensens, in Joannem stabit auctorem—I. 4. adv. Marcion.

of the third, ending in *Origen*, and now continued into the second century by *Tertullian*. No link in the chain, as yet, appears wanting. *Tertullian's* evidence is clearly of the same nature with that of *Cyprian*, and all his contemporaries; so that no cavils can possibly obscure it.

There is another consideration, which the impartial inquirer should keep constantly in his mind: It is this, that all the testimonies hitherto produced, not only evince, that diocesan Episcopacy was the government of the church when the authors wrote, but that it was so, in their opinion, from the very foundation of Christianity;—in short, that it was a divine institution. Let these considerations be kept in mind, I say, and it will greatly facilitate the perception of that truth we are in pursuit of.

The next quotation from *Tertullian* is of the same nature with the last. He challenges the heretics to “produce the originals of their churches, and show the order of their Bishops so running down successively from the beginning, as that every first Bishop among them shall have had for his author and predecessor, some one of the Apostles or Apostolical men, who continued with the Apostles. For in this manner, the Apostolic churches bring down their registers; as the church of *Smyrna* from *Polycarp*, placed there by *John*; the church of *Rome* from *Clement*, ordained by *Peter*; and so do the rest prove their Apostolical origin, by exhibiting those who were constituted their Bishops by

the Apostles."* Here, again, we have Episcopacy of Apostolic institution; Bishops placed over the churches by the Apostles themselves—not *standing Moderators*, but officers who had power *out of* the Presbytery as well as *in* it; and *much more* power when *out* than *in*—not *Rectors* of parishes, with a tribe of useless Curates about them; but those officers who authorized Presbyters to administer the sacraments, and, of consequence, to dispense the *word of life*; still controlling them in the exercise of those powers, and by these very circumstances keeping a rod of discipline over their heads, which we know they frequently applied to the disobedient, to the “punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of true religion and virtue.” *These* were *Tertullian’s* Bishops, and *these*, he tells us, were the Bishops established over the churches by the Apostles.

We shall now find no difficulty in answering your objections, and showing their extreme weakness.

1 Apol. “In our religious assemblies,” says *Tertullian*, “certain approved *Elders* *preside*, who have attained their office by merit, and not by bribes.” Again. De Corona. “We receive the sacrament of the Lord’s supper from the hands of none but the *Presidents* of our assemblies.” Ibid. “Before we go to the water to be baptized, we first, in the church, under the hand of the *President*,

* *Tertullian de præscript. c. 32.*

profess to renounce the devil." You, besides, inform us, that *Tertullian* says, the Christians where he resided, received the Lord's supper three times in every week. Your inferences from all these are, "that Presbyter, President, and Bishop, are employed by *Tertullian*, as titles of the same import:" and that it was impossible for one man to perform all the baptisms, and administer the Lord's supper three times a week to all his flock. And "to impossibility, absurdity is added, by supposing, as Episcopalians must, that the Bishop did all this when he had many Presbyters under him, who were all invested by the very nature of their office, with the power of administering both sacraments as well as himself."* This, Sir, is *your* account of the matter; and let you tell your own story, there is some little speciousness in it. But, perhaps, things are not exactly as you represent them. Let us give *Tertullian* a fair hearing.

But first I would observe, that it is upon *your* plan of government, not upon *ours*, that there are both *impossibility* and *absurdity*. According to that plan, the Bishop was the *Rector*, the Presbyters were his *Curates* or *Assistants*; for you allow *preaching* Presbyters, as well as *ruling* Elders, to have generally been in the city churches. But unfortunately for you, all the Presbyters at *Carthage* administered the sacraments; so did those at *Rome*, as we find

* Letter v. p. 170, 171, 172.

from the writings of *Cyprian*. At *Rome*, we know to a certainty, there were forty-six Presbyters ; and not the shadow of a ruling Elder there. If, then, according to your interpretation of *Tertullian*, the Bishop, that is, the Rector, administered both sacraments with his own hands, and *he alone*; and that he administered one of them, the eucharist, to thousands of Christians three times a week (for we know that there were thousands in that church) ; I beg to know how the *impossibility* of all this is removed by your plan. If the congregation at *Carthage* was but one, and that one congregation consisted of many thousands, then a single person could not possibly discharge all these duties ; for you take care to interpret *Tertullian* in such a manner, as to exclude the Presbyters from having any hand in the business. You say, expressly, “ the man who performed every baptism in the church under his care, and who administered the Lord’s supper three times every week to all the members of his church, could only have been the pastor of one congregation.” And I say, even so, when that congregation consisted of many thousands, as I have proved it did at *Carthage*, he could not have discharged those duties without the aid of his Presbyters. And thus, *impossibility* and *absurdity* are fairly retorted upon you.

But, Sir, neither of these consequences has any connection with diocesan Episcopacy, when you take *Tertullian* by the right handle. He says, “ The

Christians," in his time, "received the sacrament of the Lord's supper from the hands of the Presidents alone." Pray, Sir, how do you know that these Presidents were the *Bishops only*? *Tertullian* gives them no character which obliges us to confine ourselves to that sense. It is very certain, that Presbyters are Presidents over the particular congregations in which they officiate. We cannot, therefore, determine the meaning of the title without some distinctive characters, such as *Firmilian* gives to his *presiding Elders*—the characters of performing *confirmation*, and conferring *holy orders*, which settle the meaning of the title *presiding Elders*, without any farther comment.

But, Sir, to put this point beyond the possibility of a reply, let us consider the scope of the passage in *Tertullian*, relating to the Lord's supper. This I will do in the words of the author of *An Original Draught of the Primitive Church*, &c. That excellent writer observes, "*Tertullian* was contending for the authority of tradition for many common rites then used in the Christian church, without a scripture warrant for them. Amongst these customs, he instances a general practice in the church *then* to communicate in the morning, different from the time of the institution itself;* and together with that, this which we are now speaking

* Eucharistiæ sacramentum, et in tempore victus, et omnibus mandatum a Domino, etiam antelucanis cælibus, nec de aliorum manu, quam Præsidentium sumimus. *Tertul. de Corona*, p. 121.

of, that they received the communion from the President's hands alone; both equally common in his days in the Christian church; which, to make as clear an interpretation of it as we can, I think implies neither more nor less than this, that as the sacrament was then generally administered in the morning, so wherever it was administered, the consecrated elements were usually delivered to the communicants (as it is indeed most in use now) by the hands of them only, who presided in the several assemblies where those holy exercises were performed; that is, I humbly conceive, by the officiating ministers themselves.* And what appearance of proof there is in all this, for a Bishop's personally distributing the blessed elements to every communicant in his whole diocese at one time, and in one place; I desire the words and context may be sifted, and I should willingly sit down by the reader's judgment.†

But it may be asked, did not all adult catechumens profess before baptism, to renounce the devil, the pomp, &c. in the presence of the Bishop? How does this accord with his being a *diocesan*? I answer, the word *antistes* does not necessarily imply a Bishop; but I will admit that it does; and I will farther concede, that the catechumens, at least those of the city churches, did generally make their pro-

* Whereas in many places (as Justin Martyr tells us) the Deacons used to do it.

† Draught Prim. Church, &c. p. 66, 67.

fession of faith before the Bishop ; but still, you will derive no advantage from it, for *Tertullian* informs us, that “ it was a very large space of time which was set apart for this very ordering of baptism every year, even *the fifty days from Easter to Whitsuntide*.”* So that hundreds in that time, in a pretty large diocese, might have made this profession ; and many of them, if not all, had it been necessary, might have been baptized too by him ; but *that*, *Tertullian* does not say, and therefore you have no right to say so. All that he says, is, “ that the Bishop hath the right of baptism, [that is, the first, the chief right,] and then the Presbyters ; but for the honour of the church, not without the Bishop’s authority.”

I have now, I think, taken a fair, and pretty full view of *Tertullian*’s testimonies ; and I flatter myself, that they will appear to every impartial mind, a continuation of that chain of evidence, which I am running up to the age of the Apostles.

Still ascending to the source of all ministerial authority in the church of Christ, the next author I shall quote, is *Clemens Alexandrinus*. This writer was contemporary with *Tertullian*, and a Presbyter of the church of *Alexandria*. He was also the immediate predecessor of the famous *Origen*, in the philosophical and theological school of that city.

* Diem baptismo solennem pascha præstat exinde pentecoste, ordinandis lavacris latissimum spatium est, quo et Domini resurrectionis inter discipulos frequentata est. Ter. de Bapt. c. 19.

After *Tertullian* and *Origen*, and the other writers of the third century, have so explicitly given their testimony to the Apostolical institution of Episcopacy, we may be pretty certain that *Clemens* intimates nothing to the contrary; but if he did, it could have no weight against such voluminous evidence. Let it also be considered, that the church of *Alexandria* at that time, was unquestionably Episcopal; that *Demetrius* was the Bishop, and *Clemens* one of his Presbyters; and that the congregations in that city and the neighbouring country were numerous. Let it be further remembered, that complete evidence has been given that Bishops were then *diocesan*—that they had the supreme power of the keys—that neither Presbyters, nor Deacons could administer the sacraments but by their authority, and under their control—that, of consequence, they had a *supremacy of jurisdiction* as well as a *priority of dignity*—and, lastly, that they had the sole power of ordination and confirmation. Let these things, I say, be considered, and then we shall perceive *Clemens* bearing the same testimony, that the writers subsequent to his time have borne.

To come at the true meaning of such writers as *Clemens* and *Origen*, who, you know, were deeply tinctured with *Platonic* mysticism, is not always an easy matter. When they speak like other folks, they are very intelligible, and generally instructive; but when they involve themselves in allusions, we

may sometimes wander long before we reach the point they have in view.

The propriety of this observation will be evident to our readers, upon the very first inspection of the passages usually quoted from *Clemens*. In his *Stromata*,* or *Miscellanies*, he represents a true *Gnostick*, “as master of all his passions, and then improving in good works till he becomes equal to an angel here; and being bright and shining as the sun, hastens on through his righteous knowledge, and the love of God, to a holy mansion, as the Apostles did before.” He further says, “Every one who exercised himself in the commandments of the Lord, and lived as a perfect *Gnostick* according to the gospel, might be admitted into the Apostolic roll; that is, admitted to as high a seat in heaven. He further explains himself in these words: “He is a Presbyter in the church indeed, and a true Deacon of the will of God, if he does and teaches the things of the Lord; not ordained of men, or therefore thought a righteous person, because made a Presbyter, but because righteous, therefore chosen into that Presbytery; and though he be not *honoured with the first seat here on earth*, yet shall hereafter sit down on the twenty-four thrones, judging the people, as *St. John* says in the *Revelations*.”—“The sense of this whole speculation, I think,” says the candid and judicious

* Page 792, 793.

Slater,* “ appears plainly to be this, that in respect of true intrinsic excellency here, and of a title to perfect bliss and happiness hereafter, neither Apostle, Presbyter, Deacon, nor Layman, has any great advantage of one another, by any outward character, title, or difference of order they may have below, but purely as they excel one another in Christian virtue, divine knowledge, wisdom, and goodness; and so are more perfect Christian *Gnostics* than the rest. And, therefore, if a Presbyter (in particular) be such a qualified saint as this, though he be not honoured with the *first seat* here; that is, (says he) with as high a seat as any I have named to you, which, in plain connection with the whole argument, is, with an *Apostolical chair* in the church, (for an Apostle was one of the orders in his comparison, amongst the rest) yet he shall sit in the twenty-four thrones, judging the people, as *John* speaks in the *Revelations*; as if he had directly said, although he may not sit in a Bishop’s place, (whose see *Tertullian*, contemporary with *Clemens*, calls an *Apostolical chair*, and the church at that age acknowledged Bishops to be their proper *successors*.) yet he shall sit (says *Clemens*) at the last day, among the chiefest saints, to judge the world with Christ; and that the mentioning of a *first chair* of a Presbytery, in the sense in which this Father names it here, should imply, that

* Page 223, 224.

every Presbyter, who sat in the Presbytery also, should be of equal order with him, who sat in the first and highest seat in it, by this evidence of *Clemens*' for it, I leave now to the reader's judgment on the place."

The next testimony I have to produce, is taken from the third book of his *Pedagogue*, chapter 12th.* After having pointed out some texts of scripture, as containing a summary of the duties which concern Christians in general, he adds,—“There are other precepts without number, which concern men in particular capacities; some of which relate to Presbyters—others which belong to Bishops, and others respecting Deacons;” from which it is incontrovertible, that *Clemens* asserts the same form of government to be in the church that *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Cyprian*, and all the other writers of the third century, did; and also that he considered the respective duties of these several orders to be distinctly stated in the holy scriptures, and, consequently, that these orders are of divine origin.

But, Sir, how will all this agree with your scheme? How will it accord with the notion of a *Moderator* of a Presbytery? What precepts in the holy scriptures peculiarly relate to him? What appropriate duties belong to him, excepting the duty of collecting the votes of the Presbytery? There certainly could not be much need of a scriptural

* Archbishop Potter's Church Government, p. 152.

precept for that. A little common sense and honesty are quite sufficient to qualify any man for that business. Indeed, the idea is quite ridiculous; and, therefore, I shall dismiss it.

Now what sort of a Bishop he was, who had the *first seat* on earth—to whom duties belonged distinct from those belonging to a Presbyter, to a Deacon, and to a Layman, all the writers quoted have fully taught us; and surely I need not mention again his peculiar powers and privileges.

My next quotation I take from your book, p. 159. “Now in the church here, the progressions of Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons, I deem to be imitations of the evangelical glory, and of that dispensation which the scriptures tell us they look for, who, following the steps of the Apostles, have lived according to the gospel in the perfection of righteousness. These men, the Apostle writes, being taken up into the clouds, shall first minister as *Deacons*, then be admitted to a rank in the *Presbytery*, according to the progression in glory: for glory differeth from glory, until they grow up to a perfect man.”

The interpretation you give to this passage, appears to me to be highly unwarrantable. You infer, that Bishops and Presbyters are of the same order, because *Clemens* says, he deems the progressions in the church “to be imitations of the angelical glory;” and the scriptures, you say, mentioning only angels and arch-angels, according to

the comparison of *Clemens*, there can be but two orders in the church.

It is really very extraordinary, that a candid adversary, as you profess yourself to be, should lay hold of such an obscure circumstance as this, to invalidate *Clemens*' explicit enumeration of the different orders of the church. *Clemens* does not say, that Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, are imitations of the two-fold orders of angels and arch-angels, but of the *angelical glory*; and in that glory, the scriptures assure us, there are thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers. The object *Clemens* had in view was not to show, that there was just such a number of orders in the church as in the heavenly mansions; but to show that there is a progression here below, as well as in heaven—to show that the officers of the Christian church are no more formed upon a plan of equality, than the inhabitants of the heavenly temple. What consummate folly would it have been, had *Clemens* pretended to determine what orders are comprehended under the two grand distinctions of angels and arch-angels! He does not so much as mention them, but confines himself entirely to the idea of *progression*;—as there are progressions in heaven, so there are also in the church upon earth.

Besides, (as *Slater* observes*) “since Deacons and Presbyters have unquestionably a distinct order

* Page 226.

from one another, and yet but one common word [$\Pi\text{Coxo}\pi\eta$] is used to express these two progressions, and that of the third together with them; it is a forced and unwarrantable construction of the venerable Father's phrase, to make him mean a difference of order between two of those progressions, and no difference at all in the third." Further, when *Clemens* advanced his glorified saints from the inferior state of Deacons into the Presbytery afterwards, he did not consummate their bliss there; but adds, that "glory differs from glory," till they "increase to a perfect man." And that this "increase to a perfect man" was a farther advancement than that of his Deacon and Presbyter saints before, is not only evident by what he adds immediately upon it, viz. that such as those rest in the holy mount of God, in the uppermost church, where the philosophers of God do meet together, (so his *Platonic* phrase is) and a great deal more of that superlative character of them; but, I think, is undeniably clear, at his summing up this whole argument, a leaf or two after, in these words: "You see what wisdom says of these Gnostics. And in proportion to this, there are different mansions, according to the believers. *Solomon* says, a select grace of faith shall be given to him, and a more delightful lot in the temple of the Lord. This comparative shows there are inferior ones in God's temple, which is the universal church; and it gives us to understand that there is a superlative one too,

where the Lord is. These three elect mansions are signified by the numbers in the gospel, of thirty, sixty, and an hundred-fold. And the perfect inheritance is theirs, who attain to the perfect man, according to the image of the Lord."

I think, Sir, you must allow that this is a pretty difficult speculation, and perhaps a pretty fanciful one too. All that is clear in these quotations is, I am persuaded, on our side of the question. It is clear, that he enumerates the three orders in the church—that he gives to the Bishop the *first* seat; and that he asserts that there are different precepts in the scriptures belonging to each order; which necessarily implies, that there is some important distinction between the Bishop and the Presbyter, as there is between the Presbyter and the Deacon. Thus all is consistent, and perfectly accords with the numerous testimonies previously quoted.

Let me just observe, before I quit this point, that the great champions of Presbytery, *Blondel*, *Salmasius*, and *Daille*, could not perceive in *Clemens* what it seems you have discovered. They acknowledge, that *diocesan* Episcopacy was the general government of the church before the time of *Clemens*. Many other able writers acknowledge the same, as you will see by consulting *Sage's Cyprianic Age*. Nay, some go up as high as the Apostolic age, or thereabouts. *Baxter*, as quoted by Bishop *Hoadly*, acknowledges that there were fixed Bishops in the

time of *St. John. Doddridge*, as quoted by *Chandler*,* admits that the distinction between Bishop and Presbyter has been as ancient as the time of *St. Ignatius*; and *Le Clerc*, a divine of the church of *Holland*, says, "I have always professed to believe that Episcopacy is of Apostolical institution, and consequently very good; and that man had no manner of right to change it in any place, unless it was impossible otherwise to reform the abuses that crept into Christianity."† *Grotius* also was of the same opinion with *Le Clerc*, as appears from his *Annotations on the Consultations of Cassander*. Acts xiv. and from *Testimonies concerning him* annexed to his book *De veritate*, &c. Now, Sir, the concessions of these men must have proceeded from a conviction, that the *Fathers* were universally against *Presbytery*. It could not have proceeded from want of learning; for all the world acknowledge, that they were very learned men. Nor for want of zeal; for some of them contended strenuously against the divine right of Episcopacy. Do not then these concessions afford a very strong presumption, that you have given your readers a very partial and unfair view of the primitive writers? To me it appears that you have given such a view, to a degree far beyond what I expected when I began to sift your testimonies; and I cannot but

* Appeal, p. 20. Lectures, p. 498.

† As quoted by the Bishop of Lincoln.

flatter myself, that hitherto, I have fully supported my assertion.

As to your other quotations from *Clemens*, in which a Bishop is called a Presbyter, that puerility has been answered so often, that I am ashamed to say any thing more about it.

The *Father* who comes next in course is *Irenæus*. But as this letter is sufficiently extended, I shall begin my next with his testimonies.

LETTER VII.

REV. SIR,

I SHALL now proceed, in course, to consider the testimony of *Irenæus*, Bishop of *Lyons*, in *Gaul*.

Let it be remembered, that *Irenæus* flourished about twenty years before *Tertullian* and *Clemens*—that he was, first, a Presbyter in the church of *Lyons*, and after the death of *Pothinus*, was raised to the Episcopal chair; and that he was a disciple of the celebrated *Polycarp*, Bishop of *Smyrna*, who had been in his youth well acquainted with the Apostle *John*. Such a man must certainly have known what the government of the church was from the Apostolic age.

The following testimonies I take from your own translation of *Irenæus*. Lib. iii. cap. 3. “The Apostolic tradition is present in every church. We can enumerate those who were constituted Bishops by the Apostles in the churches, and *their successors* *evento us*, who taught no such thing. By showing the tradition and declared faith of the greatest and most ancient church of *Rome*, which she received from the Apostles, and which is come to us *through the*

succession, we confound all who conclude otherwise than they ought." Again; Lib. iv. cap. 53. "True knowledge is the doctrine of the Apostles, *according to the succession of the Bishops*, to whom they delivered the church in every place, which doctrine hath reached us, preserved in its most full delivery."

Further; Lib. v. cap. 20. "These are far later than the Bishops to whom the Apostles delivered the churches."

Once more; Lib. iv. cap. 43. "Obey those Presbyters in the church who have the succession as we have shown from the Apostles; who with the succession of their Episcopacy, have the sure gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But as to the rest, who depart from the *succession*, and are assembled in any place whatsoever, we ought to suspect them, and look upon them as heretics, and such as disturb the peace, as persons puffed up, &c."*

Now, what *Irenæus* showed us before, was this—"We can reckon up to you those who were instituted Bishops by the Apostles themselves—to whom they committed the churches—left them their *successors*, delivering up to them their own proper place of *mastership* in them."†

Here we clearly see what kind of Presbyters *Irenæus* means, even such as the Apostles them-

* Doctor M. has thought proper to omit from—"But as to the rest," &c. For what reason he knows best.

† Lib. iii. cap. 3.

selves were—Presbyters of a superior kind—to whom the Apostles delivered up *their own proper place, or mastership* in the church. The Apostles did not deliver up this *mastership* to all the Presbyters in the church of *Rome*, but to one superlative Presbyter, or Bishop, who exercised the same authority that the Apostles themselves did.

This *singular* succession, so universally, without one exception, maintained by the primitive church, has always appeared to me to be a decisive argument in favour of the superiority of Bishops. For upon what principle of common sense, of propriety, of policy, could an individual succession be maintained, if that individual did not possess powers superior to those of the Presbyters, over whom he held, as *Irenæus* speaks, a *mastership*. That *mastership* over the clergy, the Apostles held; that *mastership*, they committed to an individual in every church, for the same purpose. Does not this necessarily imply a singularity of commission and powers? Will it do to say, as you did before, “the Bishop might have been a *standing moderator*?” I really, Sir, wonder that you can have recourse to this contemptible evasion. Were the Apostles no more than *moderators*? Did their superiority, their *mastership*, consist in collecting the votes of the Presbytery? What authority has a *moderator* over his brethren? Does he possess a single, spiritual power, which they do not? Has he, in a peculiar manner, the care of the church? Does he hold a

rod of discipline in his hands, as the Apostles did ; as we shall see, in due time, *Timothy* did ; and as we have already seen the Bishops did ? In the very nature of the thing, this *mastership* implies a superiority of dignity and jurisdiction. *Masters*, and yet perfectly on a footing with those whom they govern ! The *successors of the Apostles* in the government of the church, and yet upon a level with Presbyters, who never were so distinguished ! Always discriminated, in consequence of this succession, by the name of the city in which they resided, and yet not having a single distinctive power from the other Presbyters ! These, Sir, are very strange things. I hope you will excuse us, Episcopalians, if we treat them as *contemptible puerilities*.

“ But *Irenaeus* calls a Bishop a Presbyter, and says, Presbyters were the successors of the *Apostles*.”

It has, Sir, ever been the conduct of our adversaries in this dispute, to pay more regard to *names* than *things*. When they find an instance of a Bishop's being called a Presbyter, (which, by the way, is very seldom,) they speak with as much confident triumph, as if Episcopacy had received its death wound. Even when the word Presbyter has the distinctive characters assigned to it of *mastership*, *supremacy of the keys*, *confirmation*, *ordination*, *Apostolical succession* : still it answers no purpose. The same thing is perpetually reiterated, and I do

not see that we have any remedy but patiently to bear it.

As a specimen of this confidence of assertion, I exhibit the following extract from your 4th letter. After you have quoted *Irenæus*, you ask, "What could be more conclusive? If this venerable Father had been taking pains to show that he employed the terms *Bishop* and *Presbyter* as different titles for the same office, he could scarcely have kept a more scrupulous and exact balance between the dignities, powers, and duties connected with each title, and ascribed interchangeably to both."

Now, Sir, consider this. I have traced *diocesan* Episcopacy from the fourth century up to the second, by such discriminating and lucid characters as cannot easily be mistaken.—I have shown by a cloud of witnesses, that it was not only the government of the church when they wrote, but that it had been so from the age of the Apostles.—I have observed that several of these writers have given us lists of these diocesan Bishops, as *Jerome*, *Eusebius*, *Tertullian*, and *Irenæus*:—that these Bishops had under their government a number of Presbyters, and numerous congregations;—that those writers give us no hint of any change whatever after the close of the Apostolic age; but, on the contrary, assert, that, *as* the church was left by the Apostles, *so*, in point of government, it was in their times. Yet, after all this evidence, we are told, in the most po-

sitive manner, that the church was *Presbyterian* in the days of *Irenæus*, because that Father gives to a *superior* officer the title of an *inferior*—to a Bishop the title of *Presbyter*; although at the very time, by ascribing to his *Presbyter* the Apostolic *superiority* and *mastership*, he scarcely leaves it in our power to mistake him:—Consider this, I say; and if you can think that you are right, I have nothing further to say, than—enjoy your opinion in peace.

It may be well, before I conclude this testimony, to observe, that *Irenæus* uses the same language, and, consequently, must have intended to convey the same ideas, that *Cyprian* and other writers do. From *singular* succession they infer Episcopal superiority. Thus *Cyprian*: “What greater and better thing can I wish for, than to see the flock of Christ illuminated by the honour of your confession? For as it is the duty of all the brethren to rejoice on this account, so particularly the Bishop’s portion of the common joy is greater, in as much as the glory of the church is the *superior’s* glory.”* Here the Bishop is evidently represented as a *singular superior*. Again; “What reason have we to be afraid of the wrath of God, when some *Presbyters*, neither mindful of *their own station*, nor regardful of the Bishop, their *superior*, are bold to assume all to themselves, to the reproach and con-

* Ep. 13.

tempt of their *superior*, a thing never heretofore attempted under any of my predecessors."* Does not *Cyprian* here tell us, that Bishops were superior to Presbyters, not only in his time, but under all his predecessors? It would not have required many to reach the Apostolic age, and but two or three at the most, to comprehend the period when *Irenæus* wrote. And yet it seems *Cyprian*, and *Origen*, and *Tertullian*, and *Irenæus*, and others, mean nothing by this *superiority*, and *mastership*, and *succession to the place of the Apostles*—nothing but a *Moderatorship*. *Credat Judæus Apella, non ego.*

I might here, Sir, institute two or three topics of argumentation, such as that, in consequence of this *singular* succession and *mastership*, the Bishops formed a distinct *college*, and always styled one another *colleagues*; a title which they never gave to Presbyters; and also, that they were the only persons who gave definitive voices in provincial councils. We, indeed, find a few instances of Presbyters and Deacons signing their names to the decrees of councils; but it was in consequence of their being the representatives of their Bishops, who did not attend. I might insist upon the superiority and variety of their titles;—such as *chief pastor*, *head*, *judge*, *governor*, and what has been already noticed, *Bishop of the city in which they resided*. These

are all strong, corroborating circumstances, upon which I might dwell with advantage to our cause. But I really think there has been so much said already, that it is quite needless to dwell any longer upon this stage of the dispute.

There is, however, an error into which you have run, which requires correction. You inform us that "*Irenæus* was Bishop of *Lyons*, when he was sent with a letter from the Presbyters of that church, to *Eleutherus*, Bishop of *Rome*, and that in that letter he is styled *brother* and *colleague*." Now, Sir, *Eusebius*, book v. chap. 4, tells us quite the contrary. He says, speaking of the sufferings of the Christians, "This account of things the churches of *Lyons* and *Vienne* communicated in an epistle to the churches of *Asia* and *Phrygia*; and likewise to *Eleutherus*, Bishop, in a letter which they sent by *Irenæus*, then one of their Presbyters, with a special recommendation of the person who carried it." *Pothinus*, their Bishop, had just received the crown of martyrdom. *Irenæus* was but a Presbyter, and, therefore, he was very properly styled by the Presbyters, their *brother* and *colleague*. It was after *Irenæus*' return from *Rome* that he was made Bishop of *Lyons*.* You see, Sir, how much, at times, depends upon accuracy and fair statement.

To these testimonies from *Irenæus*, I shall add that of *Dionysius*, the celebrated Bishop of *Corinth*,

* See Cave's Lit. Hist. page 50.

who flourished rather earlier than *Irenæus*. You know, Sir, that *Eusebius** has preserved some fragments of his writings, particularly of some of his epistles; one of which was written to the *Lacedæmonians*—another to the *Athenians*, in which he mentions the martyrdom of *Publius*, their Bishop, and notices *Quadratus* his successor—third, to the *Cretan* churches, in which he gives a great character of *Philip*, their Bishop—fourth, to the church of the *Amastrians*, and the rest of the churches in *Pontus*, in which he mentions *Palma*, their Bishop—fifth, to the *Gnossians*, wherein he dissuades *Pinytus*, their Bishop, from urging celibacy upon his clergy;—and, lastly, a letter to the church of *Rome*, inscribed to *Soter*, the Bishop.

Here, again, we evidently have the same form of government that has hitherto uniformly presented itself to our view. Bishops in several cities, exercising authority over both clergy and laity, and deriving their succession from the Apostles; and, consequently, holding their *superiority*, their *mastership*, their *rod of discipline*. There were besides these, a great number of very distinguished Bishops in that age, many of whom are mentioned by *Eusebius*† with every mark of commendation—virtuous, pious, learned, zealous; and of these, not a few received the crown of martyrdom. From such men there was no danger of usurpation; no danger, if

* Lib. iv. c. 23.

† Ibid. c. 21.

it had even been in their power, of changing the institutions of their blessed Master, for whom they freely shed their blood.—*Dionysius* you have not thought proper to notice.

Nor have you noticed *Hegesippus*, of whose history some fragments have been preserved by *Eusebius*.

Hegesippus flourished some time before *Dionysius*. He was born at the beginning of the second century; so that he was, as *Jerome* speaks, *vicinus Apostolorum temporum*, near the times of the Apostles.* He may be considered as a writer in the middle of that age. According to the *fragments* in *Eusebius*,† “he declares of himself, that as he had made it his business to visit the Bishops of the church, so he had found them all unanimous in their doctrines; and that the same books of the law, the same gospel and faith, which God had revealed both before and by Christ, had been constantly preserved along with *the succession of the Bishops in all the churches*.” And further he says, that “the first heretic was *Thebuis*, who was disappointed in his expectations of a bishopric.”‡

Now, Sir, is it not very extraordinary, that when all the writers of antiquity lay so much stress upon *Apostolical succession*, there should be found so many teachers in the church of Christ, who inform their people, that *succession* is a mere whim? We

* De Script. c. 22.

† Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. c. 22.

‡ Ibid.

have seen, that from the days of *Jerome*, who was a strict maintainer of this doctrine, up to the author now under consideration, an *uninterrupted succession* was considered as one necessary mark of a Christian church; and I think we shall find in our future speculations, that it was so considered by every other more ancient writer, who had any occasion to speak upon the subject, up to *Clemens Romanus*, to the Apostles, and to Christ himself. It is to the wretched notions so many entertain of the Christian ministry, that the church is so deformed, and rent with such a variety of sects; that we have so many self-constituted teachers—so much ignorance, enthusiasm, and irregularity among the preachers of the gospel. These things ought not to be so; nor would they be so, were Christians better acquainted with the primitive regimen and discipline.

We see now, Sir, from *Hegesippus*, who lived very near the Apostolic age, the same Episcopal government that we have been hitherto exhibiting; the same doctrine of succession to the *chairs* of the Apostles, and, consequently, the same *superiority* and *mastership*. And it appears, from him, that this government was universal; for every where in his travels, he found Bishops presiding over the clergy and laity—Bishops, pure and unanimous in their faith, and deriving their authority by *vicarious* ordination from the hands of the Apostles.

The next author you quote is *Papias*, Bishop of

Hierapolis, a city of *Asia*. I need not transcribe the passage, as the only observation you make is, that he styles the *Apostles*, *Presbyters*. And certainly he might do it with great propriety, when they style themselves so. But does he style mere Presbyters, Apostles, or Bishops? When you find instances of that kind in the second and subsequent centuries, produce them, and they shall be treated with due attention.

After I had written the above, I perceived that I had inadvertently passed over your long quotation from *Justin Martyr*, who was earlier than *Irenæus*, but to whom you have postponed him. Why you have quoted him, I do not know, unless it be to give you an opportunity of saying something against a form of prayer.* The word *President* affords no testimony either for or against Episcopacy. We

* Upon two words in *Justin*, Dr. M. in a note, makes the following observations. "This passage is one among the numerous testimonies with which antiquity abounds, that there were no forms of prayer used in the primitive church." This must be meant of the first three centuries; for in the fourth, it was notoriously otherwise. Where those "numerous testimonies" are to be found, I acknowledge myself profoundly ignorant; nor need I, in the least, concern myself about them, if they imply no more than the words of *Justin*. The expression *ὅν δύναμις* is not badly rendered by, according to his ability; but it may, at least with equal propriety, be translated, with all might and power, and then it may relate to the ardency and intensity of devotion, and not to the intention of words. To prove this otherwise, may, for ought I know to the contrary, be within the compass of the Dr.'s critical skill; but I take the liberty to say, that I very much doubt it.

Whoever wishes to see this controversy managed with ability, should read Bingham, Comber, Wheatly, Wells, the London Cases, and the Blacksmith's Letter,

must have some characteristic of the person who presides in public worship, to determine whether he is a Bishop or a Presbyter ; but *Justin* gives us none. No doubt, the Presidents were sometimes the one, and sometimes the other.—I can perceive nothing, either for *your* purpose or *mine*, in *Justin*.

We are now about to open a pretty wide field of controversy, which the *epistles of Ignatius*, as you have managed them, will necessarily occasion.

You inform us, that “the epistles which go under the name of this venerable Christian Bishop, have been the subject of much controversy.” Not much, since the days of *Pearson* and *Hammond*, whose vindications never *have been*, and I will venture to assert, never *will be* answered. *Blondel*, *Salmasius*, and *Daille*, who were undoubtedly learned men, tried all in their power to invalidate those epistles ; but they were so triumphantly vindicated by the above named writers, that no person has since attempted to do any thing more than to *carp* at them. The great body of the *learned* of all denominations,* acknowledge the *shorter epistles*, published by *Usher* and *Vossius*, to be genuine, and

* Usher, Vossius, Grotius, Petavius, Bull, Wake, Cave, Cotelirius, Grabe, Dupin, Tillemont, Le Clerc, Bochart, Fabricius, and many others, have borne testimony to the genuineness and authenticity of the epistles of Ignatius. See Horsey's letters to Priestley, p. 34. Even Dr. Lardner, a dissenter of great learning, and a very able critic, says, “I do not affirm that there are in them any considerable corruptions or alterations.”—*Credibility of the Gospel History*, vol. ii. p. 69. This is the very language he uses with respect to the sacred scriptures.

entirely free from those corruptions which were universally admitted to belong to the *larger epistles*.

There are two opinions maintained by Presbyterian writers concerning the seven epistles published by *Usher* and *Vossius*. The greater part acknowledge, that they were written by *Ignatius*, but insist upon their having been interpolated. This opinion is attended with insuperable difficulties. The advocates for it cannot point out any quotations from the Fathers, which do not agree with the epistles. Nay, they acknowledge* that we have the same epistles that *Eusebius* had, and in the same state. They cannot name any Father who had the least suspicion of their being corrupted, which, certainly, some one or other among so many learned men would have entertained, had there been any ground for it. They run themselves into the absurd supposition, that the *learned*, between the times of *Ignatius* and *Eusebius*, were in possession of the *genuine* epistles ; but by some legerdemain they were taken out of their hands, and *interpolated* ones substituted in their place. They involve themselves in this peculiarly gross absurdity—that the churches to which these epistles were written, and which, of course, had the original manuscripts in their possession, were in like manner juggled out of them. And still farther, upon this opinion, they will find it impossible to give a

* Blondel, Daille, Salmasius, and Albertinus acknowledge it. Pearson's *Vind.* chap. iv.

rational answer to the question, why may not all the other writings of antiquity have been corrupted, if the Christians of the second and third centuries were so stupid, or so careless as to be imposed upon in this extraordinary manner? Nay, what security have we for the purity of the scriptures themselves, when those who settled the *canon* were not capable, (it would seem upon this hypothesis) to distinguish between genuine and corrupt writings? These are serious considerations, which certainly deserve the attention of those who have adopted this unjustifiable opinion.

The other supposition is, that *Ignatius* did not write any epistles. This was the opinion of *Blondel*. Here we have one of the strongest instances upon record, to what an astonishing length the spirit of controversy will sometimes carry a man. Can it be justly deemed a breach of charity to say, with *Grotius*, when writing to *Vossius* concerning *Blondel's* opinion—"The *Epistles of Ignatius*, which your son brought out of *Italy*, pure from all those things which the *learned* have hitherto suspected, [in the *larger epistles*] *Blondel* will not admit, because they afford a clear testimony to the antiquity of *Episcopacy*.* And the learned *Mosheim* acknowledges,† although at the expense of consistency, that there would have been no dispute about those epistles, had they been silent on the

* Pearson's *Vind* chap. v.

† *De rebus Christianorum*, &c. p. 161.

point of Episcopacy ; and then adds, that they are involved in obscurity. To what, Sir, does this amount? Undoubtedly to this—Do not quote them in favour of Episcopacy, and we will admit them to be genuine ; but if you do, we will enter our *caveat* against them. It is not hard to determine what name this deserves.

This opinion of *Blondel's* is maintained in the face of all antiquity. *Polycarp*, the intimate friend of *Ignatius*, bears the following testimony in his epistle to the *Philippians*. “ Ye wrote to me, both ye, and also *Ignatius*, that if any one went from hence into *Syria*, he should bring your letters with him ; which also I will take care of, as soon as I shall have a convenient opportunity, either by myself, or him whom I shall send upon your account. The *epistles of Ignatius* which he wrote unto us, together with what others have come to our hands, we have sent to you according to your order ; which are subjoined to this epistle ; by which ye may be greatly profited. For they treat of faith and patience, and of all things that pertain to edification in the Lord.” It is not possible to produce a more direct testimony to any writings, than this to the epistles of *Ignatius*.

We have a testimony also from *Irenæus* directly to our purpose. “ As,” says he, “ one of our people, for his testimony of God condemned to wild beasts, said—*I am the wheat of God, and ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I might be*

found to be pure bread." These words are in the fourth section of *Ignatius'* epistle to the *Romans*. And this passage is also cited from *Irenæus* by *Eusebius*; who, in another place, likewise says—" *Irenæus* mentions *Justin Martyr* and *Ignatius*, making use of testimonies out of their writings."

We meet with *Ignatius* twice mentioned by *Origen*. "Finally," says he, "I remember that one of the saints, *Ignatius* by name, has said of Christ; *My love is crucified*. Which words are in the *epistle to the Romans*. Again: "I have observed it elegantly written in an epistle of a martyr, I mean *Ignatius*, second Bishop of *Antioch* after *Peter*, that *the virginity of Mary was unknown to the prince of this world.*" This is in the epistle to the *Ephesians*.

Eusebius, the learned historian of the fourth century, bears full testimony to these epistles. So do *Chrysostom*, and *Jerome*, and *Theodoret*, and *Gelasius*, in the same century. And if you wish to have any more testimonies, please to consult Bishop *Pearson*, who produces them in every age, down to the fourteenth.*

Now, Sir, before I proceed to the quotations from *Ignatius*, allow me to ask you a few questions. Can there be any evidence to a point of this kind more satisfactory than this? Can we suppose that men who lived so near the time of *Ignatius*, and who were so learned, so ingenious, so critical, were not

* See also Lardner's *Credibility*, &c. vol. ii. Art. *Ignat.*

competent judges, whether the epistles of *Ignatius* were genuine or not? Are men who so accurately decide upon the merits of the writings before their time, distinguishing with great judgment the *genuine* from the *doubtful* and the *spurious*, to be disregarded in this instance only? What, was there nothing in the epistles of *Ignatius* to excite their suspicion of their being a forgery? Would not the circumstance of their making the government of the church *Episcopal*, at a time when they must have known that it was *Presbyterian*, (if it was really so) have been an irrefragable proof that they were not written by *Ignatius*? Would not the style, the manner, the sentiments, and other circumstances, which, *Presbyterian* writers say, were not suitable to the age in which *Ignatius* lived, have struck those learned *ancients* as marks of forgery, or corruption, as readily and forcibly as they have struck a few *moderns*? With what information are we furnished, to enable us to decide with more precision upon this point, than the great critics of antiquity? Let a single reason be given, why the *learned* of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries were not qualified to judge upon a point of this critical nature. Let them be proved ignorant and illiterate, or that they had some hypothesis to serve, or some interest to promote by receiving these epistles; and then we will acknowledge that some abatement is to be made from their testimony. But if nothing of this sort can be done, as I am very certain it cannot, it is

trifling to the last degree, to cavil at the epistles of *Ignatius*.

I think it will be readily allowed by every candid man, that the testimony of *Ignatius* must be of immense weight. Having been placed by Apostolic authority at the head of the church of *Antioch*, and having governed it for forty years, the greater part of that time within the Apostolic age, his testimony to a matter of fact must be deemed of equal weight with that of an Apostle, unless there be reason to think him inferior in point of veracity. But his well known virtue and piety, equal to the virtue and piety of any one of the Apostles, judging from every known circumstance relating to either, forbid every suspicion of that sort. The inspiration of the Apostles, in this case, gives them no advantage whatever; for it requires no inspiration for a man of common sense to tell under what form of government he has lived during forty years, and the chief office of which, he himself discharged during that period. All this is so obvious, that I do not think any person of consideration will dispute it.

Although you admit the genuineness of the *Ignatian epistles*, yet you do not seem to do it with a *good grace*. It comes from you reluctantly: you take care to tell us, that “in the opinion of many of the ablest and best judges in the Protestant world, they are unworthy of confidence.” To what purpose is this observation, if it be not with a design to keep the minds of your readers in a state of sus-

pense, so as to prevent any bad impression, which the seeming favourableness of those epistles to our cause might possibly make.

But, Sir, I cannot see either the consistency or the advantage of this ; for as you have made it appear, in your opinion, that *Ignatius* was altogether *Presbyterian*, it is astonishing to me, that you should insinuate one word to his disadvantage. If he be your friend, as you seem to think, why in the name of consistency, do you not defend his epistles by every argument which truth will admit ? Why do you come reluctantly to his testimonies ? They are the very testimonies you ought to prize most highly. Nothing can be more decisive but the sacred scriptures ; and these must be perfectly clear and unequivocal.

It is, Sir, to me very unaccountable, that *Blondel*, *Salmasius*, and *Daille*, should have laboured so hard to invalidate these epistles, when they are, if you be right, so clearly on their side of the question. To them, they must have appeared in a very different point of light from what they do to you. If they had not been convinced that they were too Episcopal for them to manage, they would have admitted them, and reasoned from them in favour of Presbytery. This would have been *argumentum ad homines*, which would effectually have shut the mouth of every Episcopalian. But no ; they did not choose to try that experiment. You, on the contrary, venture to affirm, that, “instead of yielding

to the cause of *diocesan* Episcopacy that efficient support which is imagined, they do not contain a *single sentence* which can be construed in its favour; but much, which can only be reconciled with the primitive, *parochial Episcopacy*, or Presbyterian government, so evidently portrayed in scripture."

—This is adventurous enough. Let us see how it will turn out.

Before I adduce my testimonies from *Ignatius*, I would remind my readers, that it has been fully proved by scripture evidence, as well as from other authorities, that the church of *Antioch* consisted of thousands of Christians, and consequently of numerous congregations, with a multiplicity of Presbyters to minister to them. Keeping this in mind, there will be no difficulty in determining what kind of Episcopacy prevailed there.

My first quotation shall be from the epistle to the *Trallians*. *Ignatius* exhorts them to be subject to their Bishop, Presbyters, and Deacons; "for (says he) without these, there is no church"—that is, upon your hypothesis, without a *Moderator*, Presbyters, and Deacons, there is no church. What relation has a Moderator to a church? None at all: his relation is entirely to the Presbytery; and he has not a single duty to perform in that character to the people; yet *Ignatius* says, without this *Moderator*, who has no relation to the church, there cannot be a church. What would any man call this in plain English? Nonsense.

After exhorting the *Trallians* to beware of the poisonous doctrines of certain dangerous heretics, he adds—"And this you will do, while you are not puffed up, nor separated from God, even Jesus Christ; nor from the Bishop, and the commands of the Apostles"—that is, while you are not separated from the *Moderator*, with whom, as such, you have no kind of connection whatever. Again—"He that is within the altar is pure; but he that does any thing" (belonging to the altar) "without the Bishop, Presbyters, and Deacons, is defiled in his conscience." "Without the Bishop"—that is, the *Moderator*, who, as such, has no relation to the altar; and, in his character as Presbyter, he is perfectly on a footing with his colleagues. Upon genuine Presbyterian principles, then, *Ignatius* ought to have left out the Bishop, who has no business at all in these epistles, but upon prelatical principles.

In like manner, in the inscription of his epistle to the *Philadelphians*, he "salutes them in the blood of Jesus Christ, our everlasting and permanent joy, especially if they were at unity with the Bishop, the Presbyters, and the Deacons."—The Bishop is an essential character, with whom they were to be at unity; but as *Moderator*, his character is not essential in relation to the people, nor can he possibly be to them a centre of unity. Again—"Let no man do any thing of what belongs to the church, separately from the Bishop. Let that be esteemed a valid eucharist, which is celebrated by the Bi-

shop, or by one whom he appoints. Without the Bishop, it is not lawful to baptize, nor to celebrate the feast of charity." The meaning of this is, upon your hypothesis—"Let that be esteemed a valid eucharist which is celebrated by the" *Moderator*, "or by whom he appoints. Without the" *Moderator*, "it is not lawful to baptize, nor to celebrate the feast of charity." Absurdity upon absurdity, gross and palpable!

Once more—"What is the Bishop but he that hath all authority and power? What is the Presbytery but a sacred constitution of counsellors and assessors to the Bishop? What are the Deacons but imitators of Christ, and ministers to the Bishop, as Christ was to the Father?"—"What is the Bishop," the *Moderator*, "but he that hath all authority and power?" Is that the case with a Presbyterian *Moderator*? Do you suppose that *Ignatius* meant "all authority and power" over the votes of the Presbytery? Again—"What is the Presbytery but a sacred constitution of counsellors and assessors to the" *Moderator*? Is the Presbytery called by the *Moderator* to counsel him how to conduct the affairs of the church—how to exercise this plenitude of spiritual power over Presbyters, Deacons, and Laity? I really, Sir, do not mean to insult your understanding by these questions; but the gloss you have given to the writings of *Ignatius* is so consummately ridiculous, that I am astonished at your ever committing such thoughts

to paper. And then not proposing your interpretation as a *modest conjecture*, but affirming in the most positive manner, that the testimony of *Ignatius* is in direct opposition to Episcopacy, and in perfect conformity with *Presbyterian parity*! When a man proceeds to this length, it becomes necessary to speak plainly, and on no account to suffer such bold assertions to pass unanswered.

Nor will it, Sir, help you in the least, if you change the word *Moderator*, as some have done, for *Pastor*, or *Rector*, or *Prime Presbyter*. This makes no alteration in the *thing*: Still *Ignatius*' Bishop, call him what you please, will be the first officer in the Christian church, governing Presbyters and Deacons, and several congregations—exercising the supreme power of the keys, and by necessary consequence, holding a supreme jurisdiction; and all this by divine institution—"according to the appointment of God the Father."

These are but a few of the passages that might be adduced from the writings of *Ignatius*; but they are full enough to show that the Christian church was, up to the Apostolic age, completely prelatical, and that no change had taken place, as you and others *fancy*, between the first and the fourth century.

Let us now see what you have to object to these decisive testimonies. And here, Sir, I must previously observe, how very unfair and uncandid it is, to retail to your readers several cavils, which have

been proved in the most triumphant manner *to be* cavils, and yet never to take the least notice of any of the replies to them. You certainly must have heard of, if you have not read, *Slater's Original Draught*, in answer to *Lord King*, which, it has always been confidently said, made his Lordship a convert to diocesan Episcopacy. Be that as it may, no answer was ever returned to it, and I am well satisfied no answer ever can be returned. If you have heard of *Slater's* book, but not read it, you should have made a point of procuring it, and of stating his answers, that your readers might have a fair opportunity of judging for themselves. You are not, indeed, singular in this respect, if that will afford you any plea. *Boyse* did so many years ago; and recently *Dr. Campbell*. The latter was answered by Bishop *Skinner*, and yet you have not taken the least notice of the Bishop's answer. At this rate, there is no end of disputing. Every few years the controversy is revived, and we have to go over the same ground perpetually. This is precisely the conduct of the Deists. In their attacks upon Christianity, they never take notice of the triumphant replies that have been made to their objections; but come forward with as much confidence, and as much petulance, as if the field was entirely their own. This conduct, Presbyterians, as well as Episcopalians, very justly censure; but when you are contending with us on the subject of church government, forgetting your censure of

the Deists, you observe the very same kind of management. This is by no means fair and impartial.—But to your objections.

1. You say, that the church, of which a Bishop had the care, is represented in the epistles as coming together to *one place*, (Επ. τὸ αὐτὸ). Now, Sir, you certainly know perfectly well, that this phrase does not so much denote a *place*, as a *thing in general*, according to the grammatical rule with respect to neuter words; and this you will find to be the case in the following instances.

Slater observes* that “the learned *Grotius*, explaining this phrase in Acts iii. 1, translates it in these words, *circa idem tempus, about the same time*. And in *Beza’s* translation of the New Testament, the note and paraphrase upon it, Acts ii. 44, is this; that *the common assemblies of the church, with their mutual agreement in the same doctrine, and the great unanimity of their hearts, were signified by it*. Agreeably to this, is what we meet with in the Greek translation of Psalm xxxiv. 3, where that which the *Septuagint* render Επὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, by *Aquila* is translated, Ὁμοθυμαδὸν, *with one mind and one heart*.” *Justin Martyr* also says, that “all the Christians throughout cities and countries assemble Επὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, certainly not *in the same place*, but for *the same thing*, or *purpose*, that is, to worship God. And in the fourth chapter of the *Acts* it is said, that the kings

* Original Draught, p. 53.

of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ against the Lord, and against his Christ. It would be absurd to suppose, that they all actually assembled *in one place*, where the passage evidently means, that they conspired together for the same purpose, the word plainly pointing to the *object*, and not to the *place* of their combination."

It now, Sir, appears beyond all contradiction, that the phrase in question must always be interpreted according to the nature of the subject, and that possessing this latitude of meaning, your confining it to a sense which answers your purpose, is by no means admissible.

But you will ask, how can μία προσευχή and μία δέσσις, *one prayer* and *one supplication*, be consistent with a plurality of congregations?

I answer, that as there most certainly were several congregations at *Antioch* from the scripture account of that church, the *one prayer* and *one supplication*, must be accommodated to that idea; and there is not the least difficulty attending it; for the expression may with equal propriety be understood in a two-fold sense; either as to the words in which prayer is expressed, or as to the sense and substance. That it is not meant to be *one* as to the *words*, you will certainly insist upon; otherwise you would make *Ignatius* prescribe a *liturgy*, for which you do not appear to have much taste. And, therefore, "it must be understood with respect to the *substance*; or, in plainer terms, it must be prayer made with

strict analogy to the one common faith, and sound doctrine of the Catholic church throughout the Christian world, as every true Christian prayer ought to be."

"And that this was *Ignatius'* meaning may be inferred, first, from the words he immediately joins with it—*one prayer, one supplication, one mind, and one hope.* The two latter words imply a plain unity in them, and yet have so diffusive a sense as to extend to all the congregations of the Catholic church; and, therefore, why not the two former? 2. We may infer it also from the use he was then making of it; which was directly to secure them from schismatical conventicles, and heretical notions; and since the Bishop himself was to approve (as we have seen *Ignatius* allowed him to do) of any minister whatsoever that should officiate for them, and thereby reserve to himself the inspection, visitation, and censure of them (which is a natural consequence of it), whatsoever prayer the people of his diocese should join in, with such a commissioned and approved Presbyter as this, could never bring them into that danger of schism the holy martyr here warned them against; but being orthodox, and as conformable to Christian faith and doctrine as the Bishop's own could be, would, in the true sense of the primitive Father, and to the great end for which he intended it, be that one prayer, which the Bishop and all his diocese were to offer up to God."

“ And that this was a true notion of the unity of prayer in the primitive churches, *Tertullian* would satisfy us, if we would allow him to speak only what he could justify and make good, in his *Apolo-
gy* for all the Christians in the *Roman* empire.— He takes the freedom to declare to the *Roman* magistrates what kind of prayer the Christian churches used in general, how innocent their petitions were, and frankly mentions several particulars of them by way of upbraiding them all for persecuting subjects that lived and prayed so loyally and harmlessly as they did.* If he could do this without some common *liturgies* in use among them, or some known *canon* of the ministerial offices; surely it could be upon no other ground than this, that he was sure the Christian churches prayers were one and the same, in all places, in the sense we are now speaking of; that is, they were bound to bear a strict analogy to that one creed, that one and the same system of Christian doctrine, and that one divine model of all prayer, which our blessed Lord delivered to them, and every one of them were known to be guided by. Other Fathers, as ancient, or ancienter than *Tertullian*, speak in the same manner.”† But on this head, I think, there needs no more.

We have, however, before we finish, another unity to account for. *Ignatius* says, “there is but

* *Oramus pro Imperatoribus, pro ministris eorum ac potestatibus, pro statu seculi, pro rerum quiete, pro mora finis.* *Tert. Apol. c. 39.*

† Slater's Original Draught, p. 55, 56, 57.

one altar as but one Bishop." To explain this phrase, the judicious *Slater* observes, "The unity of the altar, the unity of the Bishop, the unity of the eucharist, the unity of Christian prayer, and the very unity of the whole church itself, are all founded upon the common bottom that the unity of the Christian *Priesthood* is; and no man ever so unlocked the evangelical secret as the inimitable *St. Cyprian*. 'Episcopacy,' (says he,) 'is but one; a part whereof each [Bishop] holds, so as to be interested for the whole. The church is also one, which by its fruitful increase improves into a multitude, as the beams of the sun are many, as branches from trees, and streams from a fountain; whose number, though it seems dispersed by the abundant plenty of them, yet their unity is preserved by the common original of them all.' Apply this plain rule to all sorts of unities mentioned here; and see, if the primitive expressions of *one church*, *one altar*, and *one Bishop*, do not evidently consist with as many churches, altars and Bishops, as can be proved to be undeniably derived from one and the same original institutor; the unity of whose divine power and spirit, diffused at first among the chosen twelve, stamps a character of unity upon all who regularly descend from them, and upon every individual, who only claims under, and owns his authority from, and his dependence upon, such as they."*

* Original Draught, p. 60.

I perceive, Sir, that you have, after Dr. *Campbell*, translated τοῦ αἵτου, *the loaf*, instead of *the bread*; but it is beyond my comprehension what you can gain by it. I doubt, whether you can persuade any person in his senses, that one *loaf* would be sufficient for the *many myriads* of Christians, who, we are told, in the *Acts* of the Apostles, continued steadfast in the *Apostolic breaking of bread*. All the bread offered at a thousand different altars, form but *one bread*, or *one loaf*, if you will have it so, in the same mystical sense, as a thousand different churches in the same diocese, form but one church.

As a farther proof of your congregational scheme, you tell us, that the Bishop “was to be *personally* acquainted with all his flock.” So said Lord *King* before you. But, as *Slater* justly observes, “The words of *Ignatius** have no such affirmation in them, but are only a plain advice to *Polycarp* to do what the primitive Bishops always did, that is, to keep the names of every member of his church enrolled in what the ancients called the *Matricula* of their church. The occasion of the words imply it to be so. He just before besought *Polycarp* *not to neglect the widows of the church*; and immediately after desires him “not to overlook so much as the men-servants and maid-servants in it;” and in the midst of this (as a means to know the qua-

* Εξὸνέμαλος πάντας ζῆται. Ep. Poly. p. 13.

lity, number, and condition of his diocese) advises him *to inquire out all by name*,* that is, to get such a register of their names, that upon occasion of any object of charity proposed to him, of any complaint or application made to him about any within his cure or jurisdiction, or in case of apostacy, or perseverance in time of persecution, or the like ; by means of this general *matricula*, he (as the other Bishops did) might more directly know how the case stood. And, which was more than all this, the names thus entered in this sacred record were personally entitled *then* to all the public intercessions and spiritual blessings obtained by the eucharistical prayers, oblations, and sacraments of the whole church ; and to have their names blotted out of this, was a constant effect of excommunication, and was dreaded by all that had true veneration (as these primitive Christians had) for the holy ordinances of the church.—These were sufficient reasons for that Apostolical Father to put a Bishop of the church in mind to be careful of keeping such a necessary *matricula* as this, and an effectual way for *Polycarp* to take care of the meanest and poorest members of his diocese ; which, the context tells us, was the occasion of *Ignatius's* using these words. But as to the matter of but one single congregation being then under his care, and that *he must personally know them all by name*, as one neighbour

* Original Draught, p. 79.

knows another, I think they no more imply it, than that *Augustus Cæsar* had but one town to command, and could know every subject he had, when (for many political occasions) he caused them all to be enrolled, and required the state of his empire to be brought into him: For the censor's work, in such a case as that, was to give in an estimate of the age, children, family, and estates of all the people under him, as *Tully* gives us an account of it.*

Once more, Sir:—You tell us “all marriages were celebrated by the Bishop.” But *Ignatius* intimates nothing like it. He says, “It was not proper that any should marry without the Bishop's consent;” and singular as this may appear to us, it was highly expedient that it should be so in the primitive church; as otherwise, a Christian might have married a Heathen, which, probably, would have terminated in the apostacy of the former, and particularly if the husband was the heathen. To prevent this risk, and probably too from that veneration in which Bishops were held in that day, the Bishop's advice was asked, and his license procured for the celebration of the marriage; but there is not the least evidence, that the Bishop was always the officiating minister. Now, all this might be done, says *Slater*, “in the very city of *London* or *York* at this day, if either *banns*, or *licences* were managed with that proper care with which the

* *Censores populi ævitates, soboles, familias, pecuniasque censento.* Ac de leg. lib. iii. fol. 1. Orig. Draught, p. 79, 80.

church designed they should." But the church is now in very different circumstances ; and therefore we can hardly form a correct judgment upon this point. At any rate, there is no reason to think that the Bishop celebrated all the marriages within his diocese.

I have now, Sir, given, if I do not deceive myself, satisfactory answers to all your objections, and, I think, when compared with the evidence for *diocesan* Episcopacy, they are *trifles light as air*, and totally unworthy of the least consideration.

You appear to me, Sir, very sensible of the difficulty that attends your scheme of government, from the circumstance of a primitive Bishop having a number of Presbyters under his jurisdiction. Generally, this appears to have been the case ; but how to account for this upon a principle of expediency, or utility, all the advocates of parity seem to be quite at a loss. You have recourse, as some of them had, to the supposition, or probability, that several of them were *ruling* Elders. But you should first have fully proved by evidence, either from *Ignatius* himself, or some writer, or writers contemporary with him, or before him, that there ever was any such character in the Christian church. This you have attempted to do from a text of scripture of a very ambiguous nature, in the opinion of some very great men, even of your own persuasion. This subject I shall discuss in my next letter, with as much brevity as I possibly can.

LETTER VIII.

REV. SIR,

I SHALL now enter upon the discussion of the question, Whether there were *lay Elders* in the primitive church? I do not undertake to examine this point, because I think it of consequence to Episcopacy. Were I to admit such an order, still the government of the church might be placed under *Diocesans*. As Bishops have not the *sole* power in ecclesiastical affairs; as Presbyters are their counsellors and assistants in the administration of church discipline, so *ruling Elders*, even supposing them to have an equal share in the government with *preaching* Presbyters, would by no means invade the negative power of Bishops. Every congregation in this diocese might have two or three men of that order, to assist the Rector of the church with their advice in matters of discipline, and yet all be subject to the Bishop's supremacy. Episcopacy, then, is not at all affected by the decision of this question.

Why then, you may ask me, do I give myself any trouble about it?—To wrest from you the pretence that *some* of the Presbyters, if not *all* of them, mentioned by *Ignatius*, were *ruling Elders*.

My first observation, with respect to this order of church officers, is, that nine tenths of the Protestant world are opposed to the notion of such an institution. I know it does not follow logically from this circumstance, that the order is unfounded; but it affords a strong presumption against it. Nor do we find this order in the *Roman*, *Greek*, or *Coptic* churches. Nay, even Presbyterians are greatly divided upon this subject. Some of the most learned amongst them, and the most strenuous for *Presbytery*, have entirely given it up. Bishop *Sage* observes* that “*Chamier, Salmasius, Blondel, Ludovicus Capellus, Moyses Amiralduis*, and many others, are against it. The whole tribe of the *Belgic Remonstrants* (keen party men) are against it in their confession of faith.” Mr. *Baxter*, in his preface to his *Five Disputations of Church Government*, says expressly, that “as far as he could understand, the greater part, if not three for one of the English Presbyterian ministers, were as far against *lay Elders* as any *Prelatists* of them all.” He confesses himself to be one, and he cites Mr. *Vines* for another. Now, Sir, if almost the whole Christian world may be marshalled against you, and even a great part of your own persuasion, and they as learned, at least, as those who are advocates for *lay Elders*, I cannot but think and say, that you ought not to have been so positive upon this point. It

* Vind. &c. p. 442.

will strike every candid mind at once, that there can be but little said in favour of an order of men, when almost the whole Christian world condemn it, and will not admit it into their churches. This consideration, you will, I presume, duly appreciate; not considering it as a *logical* argument, but as *argumentum ad verecundiam*, and as affording a very strong presumption against you.

The text of scripture which you have quoted in favour of *lay Elders*, is, to say the very least of it, quite ambiguous. Let us examine it. “*Let the Elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour; especially they that labour in the word and doctrine.*” Now, it certainly does no violence to the words, or to the construction of the sentence, or to any other part of the scripture, to interpret this passage thus: “Let the Presbyters that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour;” especially if they labour much in preaching the word and propagating sound doctrine. There is evidently no necessity upon any ground or principle whatever, to extract from this passage the double order of *preaching* and *ruling* Elders. Neither the words, nor the context require it. Is it not, then, unjustifiable to found an order of men upon a text of scripture so completely ambiguous? What would you not say against Episcopalians, were they to found the order of Bishops upon such uncertainty? I declare, that I should be ashamed to say or write one word in favour of it. No, Sir, if I cannot give

ten times the evidence from the holy scriptures in favour of Bishops, that you can in favour of lay Elders, I will then acknowledge, that our cause rests entirely upon the testimonies of the primitive writers. This, indeed, I deem proof quite sufficient; and if you can give me the same proof for *lay Elders* in the first three centuries, I will then acknowledge them, notwithstanding the ambiguity of this text, to be of Apostolical institution. For I subscribe freely to the assertion of *Vincentius Lirinensis*, that whatever has been believed *always, and every where, and by all, ought to be held fast; for that is truly catholic.*

I find, Sir, by consulting *Dr. Campbell's Ecclesiastical Lectures*, that he considers the text in question altogether insufficient to support the institution of *lay Elders*. He says,* that the word *especially* "is not intended to indicate a different office, but to distinguish from others those who assiduously apply themselves to the most important, as well as the most difficult part of their office, public teaching; that the distinction intended is, therefore, not official but personal; that it does not relate to a difference in the powers conferred, but solely to a difference in their application. It is not to the persons who have the charge, but to those *who labour* in it. And to this exposition, as far the more natural, I entirely agree." Indeed, it is altogether inadmis-

* Vol. i. page 178.

sible, that two officers so essentially different should invariably be confounded under one common name. And it is a most extraordinary instance of attachment to a hypothesis, that you, who make a community of names an argument in favour of parity, (which, by the way, is a mere fallacy, as I shall show hereafter,) should insist, that two essentially different officers are designated by the same title. A capacity for teaching appears to be essential to the character of an *Elder*. *St. Paul* tells *Timothy* and *Titus*, that *Elders* must be *apt to teach, able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers*; and we never once in the scriptures find the epithets *ruling* and *preaching* given to *Elders*, by way of distinction. I know that *names* are not always to be depended upon; but in such cases, the *thing* signified must be characterized, or we shall remain in the dark. That, in the instance before us, such distinctive characters are given to *Elders*, as to make it clear, or in any degree probable, that some *preach*, and some *rule*, cannot, in the opinion of the generality of divines, ever be made out.

But, although the mere construction of the sentence will not enable *us* to establish *our* sense of it, yet if we attend to the meaning of one word in it, and to the sentence following, I think we shall be able to decide the point. The word I mean is *honor*. What idea are we to attach to this word? The next words show: "For it is written, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn."

And, "The labourer is worthy of his reward." Here it is evident, that the word *honor* means *maintenance*. Then the passage, according to your interpretation, will run thus: Let the *lay Elders* who rule well be accounted worthy of double maintenance, especially the Elders that are laborious in *preaching* as well as *ruling*. Here, then, it seems both kinds of Elders are to have an ample maintenance; there is the same scripture ground for maintaining the one, as for maintaining the other. Now, Sir, what is there in the employment of a *ruling* Elder, who now and then meets his Bishop in Presbytery, perhaps once a month, to regulate matters of discipline, or to "set in order the things that may be wanting," to entitle him to a maintenance? It is obvious to every reflecting mind, that the ministers of the word and sacraments, who devote all their time to their profession, and, therefore, cannot at the same time be employed in secular callings, ought to have a liberal support. But to put a *ruling* Elder, in this respect, upon a footing with a minister of the word, is altogether preposterous; and I am convinced, that your congregations would think it so, were it proposed to allow the ruling Elders as ample a salary as they do their ministers, or any salary at all. Let the experiment be made universally in your churches, and I will commit myself, that we shall never see the face of a *ruling* Elder again.

If, then, the words and construction of the pas-

sage do not necessarily establish the notion of *ruling* Elders ; and if, upon every fair principle of interpretation, they may be viewed as holding up a different idea ; and, particularly, if it follows from your sense of the passage, that *ruling* Elders are entitled to an ample maintenance as well as the ministers of the word and sacraments ; I think I may safely leave it with Presbyterians themselves to determine, whether that order of men can be of Apostolical institution. If it be determined in the affirmative, then the order may claim by Apostolical precept, a liberal maintenance ; for “ Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.” And, “ The labourer is worthy of his reward.”

There is, however, another way of determining whether an institution be Apostolical or not ; and that is, as I have already mentioned, by applying the rule of *Vincentius*. Do the *Fathers* of the first three centuries say any thing about this *lay order* ? You have not quoted a single Father, within that period, to prove it, except *Cyprian*, whose words, however, prove quite the contrary. It was the case of *Numidicus*, which was fully considered in a former letter. The express words of *Cyprian* are, that he placed him in the Presbytery that he might be added to the number of the *Priests*, who had been reduced by the persecution. Now, here I set my foot. The rule of *Vincentius*, upon your hypothesis, fails in every respect. The Fathers of those best and purest ages of Christianity, although they

repeatedly enumerate the different orders of the church, never give us the least hint of *ruling* Elders. Deacons we hear of in great plenty; but “not the shadow” of a *ruling* Elder “ever crosses our path.” This is an officer, according to your system, superior to Deacons, and yet he is never so much as mentioned. Who can believe this? It is impossible, upon any received principle of evidence, upon any solid ground of reasoning, to admit it. For if the text, upon which you found this order, is ambiguous, as it evidently is; if there is no other text of scripture which can throw light upon the one in dispute, as you yourself must acknowledge; if your sense of the passage imposes upon the church the duty of making as ample provision for *lay* Elders as for the ministers of the word and sacraments; and, lastly, if the writers of the three first ages make no mention of the order, as they certainly do not; then we may safely place it among the inventions of men; and, therefore, at best, but a matter of expediency.

But if we cannot find any testimony for it, in the first three hundred years, is there no evidence from two or three writers of the fourth century, that the order had existed in more primitive times, although it was in their time entirely out of use? I answer, if such testimony could be produced, it would be to no purpose. For, in that case, we may be sure, that the Bishops of the church were well satisfied, that it was but a temporary expedient.

It is not every institution of the Apostles that is binding. Some, in their very nature, are mere circumstances of convenience, as all parties allow; and *ruling* Elders, if they ever existed, must have been, in the judgment of the church, of that number.

But let us put the matter beyond contradiction, by examining the testimonies in the fourth century which you have produced. Your first testimony is from *Hilary*, in his explication of 1 Tim. v. 1. You ought to have begun your quotation thus*—“For, indeed, among all nations, old age is honourable. Hence it is, that both the *synagogue*, and afterwards the *church*, had *Seniors*, without whose counsel nothing was done in the church; which practice, or custom,† by what negligence it *grew into disuse*, I know not, unless, perhaps, by the *sloth*, or rather *pride* of the teachers, while they alone wished to appear something.” The sense of this whole passage is very evident. *Hilary* says, “old age is honourable among all nations.” Hence *the elderly men* of the church used to be consulted, which custom is now laid aside. Pray, Sir, what is there in this passage that implies the Apostolical institution of *ruling* Elders? He must be keen sighted that can perceive any thing like it. He says

* Nam apud omnes quidem gentes honorabilis est senectus, &c.

† Quod, [without' any substantive] quod quia negligentia obsoleverit, &c.

nothing more than that it was formerly customary to consult the aged ; no doubt in difficult situations of the church, which frequently occurred in the first three centuries, while persecution lasted. And certainly, this was all very natural and very proper ; for who are better qualified to give advice than the aged ? But to bring this as a proof of an order of men concerned in the discipline of the church, and superior to that of the Deacons, and by Apostolical appointment too, is one of the many instances which we daily see, of a zeal for opinions, which spurns every check from common sense, and every remonstrance from reason.

This whole matter has, I think, been fairly stated in a short compass by the learned *Bingham*.* He says, “ As to the *Seniores Ecclesiæ*, they were a sort of Elders who were not of the clergy, yet had some concern in the care of the church. The name often occurs in *Optatus* and in *St. Austin*, from whom we may easily learn the nature of their office. *Optatus* says, when *Mensurius*, Bishop of *Carthage*, was forced to leave his church, in the time of the *Diocletian* persecution, he committed the ornaments and utensils of the church to such of the Elders as he could trust, *Fidelibus Senioribus commendavit*. Upon which, *Albaspiny* notes, that besides the clergy, there were then some *lay Elders*, who were entrusted to take care of the goods

* *Antiq. C. Church*, p. 82, 83.

of the church. At the end of *Optatus* there is a tract called *The Purgation of Fælix and Cæcilian*, wherein there are several epistles that make mention of the same name, as that of *Fortis* and *Pupurius*, and another nameless author. *St. Austin* inscribes one of his epistles to his own church of *Hippo*, in this manner: *Clero, Senioribus, et universæ Plebi*—‘To the Clergy, the Elders, and all the people.’ And in several other places, he has occasion to mention these *Seniores* in other churches.”

“From whence some have concluded, that these were ruling *lay Elders*, according to the *new model*, and *modern acceptation*. Whereas, as the ingenious author of the *Humble Remonstrance* rightly observes in his *Reply*, those *Seniores* of the primitive church were quite another thing. Some of them were the *Optimates*, the chief men, or magistrates of the place, such as we still call *Aldermen*, from the ancient appellation of *Seniores*. These are those which the *Carbasiessitan* council of *Donatists*, in *St. Austin*, called *Seniores Noblissimi*; and one of the councils of *Carthage*, more expressly, *Magistratus vel Seniores locorum*, the ‘Magistrates or Elders of every city,’ whom the Bishops were to take with them to give the *Donatists* a meeting. In this sense *Dr. Hammond* observes, from *Sir Henry Spelman*, and some of our *Saxon* writings, that anciently our *Saxon* kings had the same title of *Elders*, *Aldermanni*, *Presbyteri*, and *Seniores*: as in the *Saxon* translation of the Bible, the word *Princes* is

commonly rendered *Aldermen*. And of this sort were some of those *Seniores Ecclesiæ* that have been mentioned, whose advice and assistance also, no doubt, the Bishops took in many weighty affairs of the church. The other sort, which were more properly called *Seniores Ecclesiastici*, were such as were sometimes trusted with the utensils, treasure, and outward affairs of the church; and may be compared to our *Church-Wardens*, *Vestry-Men*, *Stewards*, who have some care of the affairs of the church, but are not concerned as *ruling* Elders in the government, or discipline thereof. Now, *lay* Elders are a degree above the Deacons; but the *Seniores Ecclesiæ* were below them; which is a further evidence, that they were not *lay* Elders in the modern acceptation." This, I am well satisfied, is the true state of the whole matter.

Before I quit this head, I must rectify a mistake, into which my inadvertence led me. I have said in this letter, that you had not quoted any author but *Cyprian* in the third century. I have since found that I was mistaken, for you have quoted *Origen* also; but his words are nothing at all to your purpose. They run thus, according to your translation, but which I shall take the liberty to alter a little. "There are some *persons* appointed [*τιταγμένοι* without a substantive] who may inquire concerning the *conversation* and *manners* of those that are admitted, that they may debar from the congregation such as commit filthiness." There is

not a syllable here about *ruling* Elders. The matter was this : *Celsus*, who was a bitter enemy to Christianity, had calumniated the disciples of Christ by saying, that they admitted the vilest into their communion. *Origen* answers, “ No ; the governors of the church were careful to admit none to its privileges who were licentious ; and always excommunicated those who, after their baptism, became wicked.” From the whole series of the discourse, it is evident, that the persons [τεταγμένοι] who did this, had the power of the keys, could administer sacraments, excommunicate the scandalous, impose penances, and absolve penitents.* Thus turns out, like your other testimonies, the quotation from *Origen*.

I cannot, Sir, but think, that it is now pretty apparent, that the order of *lay* Elders in the Presbyterian church, is very far from being entitled to Apostolic sanction, or even to any degree of ecclesiastical prescription. In the words of Bishop *Taylor*, “ The new office of a *lay* Elder, I cannot comprehend in any reasonable proportion ; his person, his quality, his office, his authority, his subordination, his commission, hath made so many divisions, and new emergent questions ; and they, none of them all, asserted either by scripture or antiquity ; that if I had a mind to leave the way of God and of the Catholic church, and run in pursuit

* Lib. iii. Contra Cels.

of this meteor, I might quickly be amused; but should find nothing certain, but the certainty of being misguided. Therefore, if not for conscience sake, yet for prudence, it is good to remain in the fold of Christ, under the guard and supervision of those shepherds Christ hath appointed.”*

There being then no proof whatever, that there ever was such an order of men in the church as your *ruling* Elders, your assertion that “*Ignatius*’ Presbyters might have been all *ruling* Elders for aught that appears to the contrary,” is saying that they might have been of an order, which has never yet been proved to have had an existence.

There is also another important consideration that directly militates against your conjecture, that *Ignatius*’ Presbyters might be in part, or even the whole of them, *ruling* Elders. It is, that the epistles are totally inconsistent with such a notion. Let us try them in a few instances. “I exhort you, that you study to do all things in a divine concord—your Presbyters [*ruling Elders*] in the place of the council of Apostles; and your Deacons being entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ.” Here *Ignatius* makes the Deacons a branch of the ministry. But every branch of the ministry had authority to preach; consequently, the Deacons, instead of being inferior to the *ruling* Elders, must have been superior to them; for it is your own account of the matter,

* *Episcopacy Asserted*, p. 168. Folio.

that *preaching* is superior to *governing*. Again:—
“Your *ruling* Elders in the place of the council of the Apostles.” Now, this cannot be true in any sense, as the *ruling* Elders did not preach, nor administer the sacraments, nor govern the church with supreme power. Let us try another passage: “Let no man do any thing of what belongs to the church, without the Bishop. Let that Eucharist be looked upon as valid, which is either offered by the Bishop, or by him [*by that ruling Elder*] to whom the Bishop has given his consent.” You certainly will not subscribe to this. Further: “It is not lawful without the Bishop [for the *ruling* Elders] either to baptize, or to celebrate the holy communion.”—Enough! Enough!

What now are the results from the view we have taken of the epistles of *Ignatius*?

1. That in every city, in which Christianity was embraced by considerable numbers, a single Bishop, not a plurality, was divinely appointed to superintend and govern the church, of whatever number of congregations it might have consisted.

2. That to those *singular* Bishops, honour, reverence, and subjection were due from all orders, Presbyters, Deacons, and Laity.

3. That union with the Bishop was so necessary to be maintained by all the members of the church, that whoever separated himself from the Bishop, was thereby reputed to be cut off from the church itself.

4. That without the Bishop's license no spiritual act could be performed in the church; and that, consequently, he had the supreme power of the keys, which put all ranks, in spiritual matters, under his jurisdiction.

5. That there was a regular and complete gradation of rank and authority in the church. All were in the first place to honour and obey the Bishop; next, the Presbyters, and lastly, the Deacons; for "they are not the ministers of meat and drink, but of the church of God."

Now, Sir, if all this can be reconciled to *parochial Episcopacy*, or *Presbyterian* government, as you assert, then light and darkness, truth and falsehood, the most direct and palpable contradictions, can be reconciled.

But there is one more difficulty which you throw in our way. You say, that "there is no hint in the epistles of *Ignatius* about the powers of ordaining and confirming being appropriated to the Bishops." Suppose, Sir, a fanatic were to tell you, that there is no hint given by *Ignatius*, that ministers were ordained at all, either by Bishops or Presbyters; would you not think him a very unreasonable caviller, were he to urge this silence as a reason for rejecting the Apostolic rite of ordination? You certainly would. If it has been fully proved that *Ignatius'* Bishops were *diocesans*, how can his silence about *confirmation* and *ordination*, when he had not the least occasion to mention them, be urged as

an objection? If Bishops had the chief government of the church, by necessary consequence, *ordination* was their peculiar office. For, as Dr. Chandler justly observes,* “there never was in fact, so far as we can discover by the light of history, nor indeed in the nature of things can there be an Episcopal church, wherein any other than Episcopal ordination was, or can be allowed. In every society, the appointment and the commissions of the various degrees of officers, must proceed from those that govern it. This is so evident, that there never was, I believe, an advocate for the Presbyterian parity, but would readily grant, that whensoever and wheresoever the government of the church was Episcopal, the ordinations were also Episcopal.” The silence then of *Ignatius* with respect to *ordination*, affords not the slightest objection to his Bishops being *diocesans*. The superiority of Bishops being once proved, their prerogative to commission all orders of ecclesiastics, follows as a matter of course.

I have now, Sir, I think, fairly lodged *diocesan* Episcopacy within the Apostolic age; for we are not to confine it just to the time when *Ignatius* wrote; that is, to the beginning of the second century. He had been Bishop of *Antioch* forty years, and was appointed thereto by Apostolic authority; and he certainly does not give us the least hint, that

* Appeal farther defended, p. 105.

he was at first a *parochial*, and afterwards a *diocesan* Bishop. On the contrary, he repeatedly asserts, (and he certainly knew the truth of the matter) that Bishops were of divine appointment. What evidence then can be more decisive?

The next writer you notice is *Polycarp*, Bishop of *Smyrna*. It is needless for me to transcribe the passage you have quoted from him. The only two points in your comment upon it are, that the word *Bishop* is no where mentioned, and that he speaks only of two orders, *Presbyters* and *Deacons*.

I really should not think it worth while to make any reply to these observations, were it not that unthinking people take it for granted, when no reply is made, none *can* be made. *Polycarp*, you say, “does not mention the word *Bishop*.” Suppose he had mentioned it, would you consider that as any proof of *diocesan* Episcopacy? No; thank you for that. Why then notice the omission, when you know that he sent with his own letter, the epistles of *Ignatius*, in which, duty to the Bishop was mentioned over and over again. It surely was needless for him to say a syllable upon that point. He does not even style himself Bishop of *Smyrna*; yet all antiquity assert that he *was*, and you freely acknowledge it. But if your observation has any force in it, he was no Bishop of any sort. Oh yes! he was a *Presbyter*, which was the same thing, and probably *Moderator* of the *Presbytery*; for his address is, *Polycarp, and the Presbyters that are with him, &c.*

Now, as you acknowledge him to be a Bishop, he might have said, *Polycarp the Bishop, and the Presbyters that are with him.* Is this the style of your Moderators? Would you venture to use it when you are the Moderator of your Presbytery? I doubt it. The truth is, this is mere idle cavil. *Polycarp*, we know, was just such a Bishop as *Ignatius* was—a Bishop with a number of Presbyters and congregations under his government; without whose permission, no ecclesiastical functions could be performed, and on whom, the very Presbyters depended for all legal authority.

And as to *Polycarp's* comprehending all orders under the general appellation of Presbyters and Deacons, you can no more, from that circumstance, set aside the superior rank and order of Bishops, than you can, when the Jewish ministry are so often mentioned under the general appellation of Priests and Levites, set aside the High Priest.

Why *Polycarp* did not particularly address his epistle to the Bishop of *Philippi*, instead of the whole church, a much wiser man than I pretend to be, may not be able to tell. But I think it may with as much propriety be asked you, why he did not address it to the Moderator of the Presbytery; for by your own acknowledgment, all the churches we read of, had *then* a *standing* Moderator. When you answer this question, I will undertake to answer the other.

As to the *Pastor of Hermas*, which you quote

next, I never could perceive any thing in it that can be of the least service to either party. I shall therefore take no notice of it.

We have now given a sufficient view of the authorities for *diocesan* Episcopacy in the second, third, and fourth centuries. We have seen *Ignatius*, *Hegesippus*, *Dionysius*, *Irenæus* and *Clemens* in the second century—*Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Cyprian*, *Firmilian*, and the Apostolical canons in the third—in the fourth, *Eusebius*, *Chrysostom*, *Athanasius*, *Epiphanius*, *Augustine*, *Jerome*, with all the councils of that century; and in the beginning of the fifth, *Isidore* and *Theodoret*, all bearing testimony in the most direct and explicit manner to the Apostolic origin of *diocesan* Episcopacy. There is not the least intimation given in any part of their writings, that a change took place after the death of the Apostles, which must have been the case according to your hypothesis; on the contrary, what the government was in their day, it was from the beginning. This is the necessary inference from their ascribing to it a divine origin, and from the doctrine of Apostolic succession, as given us by several of them; *Jerome* among others. Now, it is scarcely possible to imagine, that a number of authors, writing at different times, and on so many different occasions, should not incidentally drop a hint of the change in the government of the church, if there had been any. Nay, farther, that these men should gravely ascribe a divine origin to Episco-

pacy, and not meet with the least contradiction, when there were thousands in the church who were as well acquainted with the matter as they were, argues such consummate impudence on the one hand, and such consummate ignorance and stupidity on the other, as render the supposition absolutely preposterous. Nothing but the notoriety of the fact, could have prevented inconsistency and contradiction in their accounts of this matter. Truth is always the same, simple, uniform and consistent; but error and falshood are so varying and irregular, as always to betray themselves. However convenient it might have been for the Bishops to have it believed, that their office was divinely instituted, yet, if there had been no foundation in fact for such a belief, it is a most unreasonable supposition, that such a notion should have obtained currency in the first four centuries, when there were so many whose learning and talents *could* have disproved it; and whose prejudice, or passion, on numerous occasions, *would* have done it. Nay, it would be incredible, were we ignorant of their characters, that all the Bishops in the first three ages, were so depraved as to destroy that government, which, they knew, Christ left in his church. But we know to a certainty, that they were generally men of very distinguished virtue and piety, and that many of them were martyrs for the religion of Christ. Such men *would* not alter divine institutions; and before the establishment of Christianity, they *could* not. Nay,

after that event, had the arm of power been stretched out in support of the ambitious pretensions of the Bishops, there would undoubtedly have been some opposition, some dissatisfaction, some remonstrance, some record of the matter. But no, there is not the least hint of any thing of the kind. The writers *before* this *supposed* event, as well as those *after it*, speak the same uniform language. Turn to which class you please, and you will find perfect harmony and consistence.

Let then the early writers of the church be put upon a fair trial ; let their testimony be equitably examined, as in all other cases of fact, by the stated laws of evidence ; and I am well satisfied, that, however the advocates for ministerial parity may, by their ingenuity, puzzle and confound the real merits of the cause, or by their glosses, assumptions, and confident assertions, mislead the judgment of the prejudiced and unwary ; yet the testimony of the Fathers, on this subject, will be deemed decisive by every impartial mind.

But it seems, after all the evidence we have produced in favour of *diocesan* Episcopacy, not the least advantage has been gained by it. You tell us very confidently in your third letter, that, "on such a subject, even if the Fathers were unanimous, we might and ought to hesitate, if nothing like what they intimate were to be found in the word of God." Now let our readers judge between us ; let every man acquainted with the nature and force of evi-

dence, judge between us. I say, on the contrary, that if the Fathers unanimously assert the Apostolic origin of Episcopacy, although there be not found one syllable upon the subject in the word of God, their testimony, upon every fair principle of evidence, must be deemed decisive.

To prove that my opinion is correct, I have but to give a short view of the nature of the evidence. The question is, whether the Christian world could be assured, fifty years after the event, that a particular form of government was established in the church by the Apostles, when there was no particular record made of it at the time? They certainly could. The government of the church was not like a solitary fact, without notice, and without consequences. If it were universally Episcopal in the beginning of the second century, it must have been in consequence of its having been so in the first; and the universality of it in the first, could have been owing to nothing less than Apostolic authority. For had it been left to uninspired men, we may be assured that different forms would have taken place, as there is nothing about which men differ more than modes of government. When, therefore, the Christians of the second century saw the Episcopal regimen descend every where from the Apostolic age to them, their testimony, that the fact was so, is absolutely decisive. There was no possibility of mistake in the matter. Thousands who lived in the second century, had lived a

part of their lives, and a great part too, in the first. They must, therefore, have seen some of the Apostles, and with their own eyes the government which they established. *Polycarp* was one of these; *Ignatius* was another. The latter spent nearly the whole of a long life in the Apostolic age ; and, according to the ancients, was ordained by *St. Peter* Bishop of *Antioch*. *Polycarp* was the disciple of the Apostle *John*, and there must have been myriads in the *Lesser Asia*, who had been instructed by his preaching. There could not, therefore, have been the least difficulty in determining, with absolute certainty, under what regimen the Apostles left the church. Men that have eyes to see, *will* see ; and that have ears to hear, *will* hear what is continually in their view, and within their hearing.

Of such facts, men want no records ; and if records were produced, in which there was some obscurity, they would immediately make their own senses their commentator, and would never be so infatuated as to interpret an obscure passage or two in the record, in direct opposition to the report of their senses. Plain facts are not like speculative opinions ; susceptible of any shape under a skilful hand. Men will believe their senses, let theorists say what they will.

Your observation, then, that even the unanimous testimony of the Fathers to Episcopacy, does not oblige us to yield our assent to that form of government, if the scriptures are silent about it, is contrary

to the common sense and practice of mankind. In the histories of all nations, we find no records coeval with the first establishment of their government. Every man who has read the history of the *Roman* Empire believes, that monarchy was its first form of government; yet, there are no records coeval with the establishment of that government. The earliest writers depend upon uninterrupted, unvarying tradition. This is the case, I believe, with all other ancient governments: where the records go back within a century or two of the origin of their policy, all mankind are perfectly satisfied; and that man would be deemed unreasonable, who *presumes* a change took place, when there is not the least appearance of it.

These reasonings and facts do, in my opinion, prove, that we should act very unreasonably, were we to hesitate a moment in giving our assent to the position, that Episcopacy is of Apostolic origin, although it should turn out upon examination, that the scriptures are perfectly silent upon the subject.

To the assertion we have just been examining, upon the common principles of evidence, may be added another of your strange assertions, that "the Fathers are not unanimous, but contradict one another." That this is a gross error, I am persuaded every impartial person will be satisfied, who duly weighs the evidence I have adduced. They all, either in direct terms, or by necessary inference, ascribe Episcopacy to Apostolic institution. Not

one of them says, it was not so. Not *one* of them gives a hint that Episcopacy is a human institution. They indeed, in a few instances, when there were no particular reasons for distinguishing the orders of the church, give the title of Presbyter to a Bishop, because he really is a Presbyter; as the *Jewish* scriptures (I am ashamed to mention it so often) generally give the title of Priest to the High Priest. But to infer contradiction from this, is abusing words, and perverting reason.

But still farther—It was morally impossible that there should be any contradiction. The government of the church was not involved in obscurity. If it was Presbyterian in the second age, the writers of that age must have known it; and to suppose some of them asserted *Presbytery*, and some *Episcopacy*, is perfectly ridiculous; as ridiculous as it would be some ages hence, for any one to assert, that from the days of *Calvin* to the eighteenth century, some of the *Presbyterian* clergy declare that their church had the *Episcopal* form, and others that it had the *Presbyterian*. And the former might have some little show of truth given to it, by producing several instances of Presbyterian ministers calling themselves Bishops; and particularly by quoting some detached passages from your *letters*, and giving them an artful touch or two, you might be made to appear as staunch an Episcopalian as I am. There is no kind of difficulty in all this; of which, I could soon convince you, could I prevail

upon myself to indulge in such puerile amusement.

We have now, Sir, I think, said quite enough about the Fathers, and I flatter myself that they are altogether on our side of the question. I shall now proceed to examine the holy scriptures, after having first made some observations on a passage in the first epistle of *Clemens Romanus*. But with this, I shall begin my next letter.

LETTER IX.

REV. SIR,

WE have one more uninspired writer to consult, *Clemens Romanus*, Bishop of *Rome*. The passage, which Episcopalians quote from this venerable Bishop, is in his first epistle to the *Corinthians*. The genuineness of this Epistle is, I believe, doubted by none. The passage runs thus : “ Seeing, then, these things are manifest to us [*Christians*], it will behove us to take care that we do all things in order, whatsoever our Lord has commanded us to do. And particularly, that we perform our offerings and services to God at their appointed seasons ; for these he has commanded to be done, not rashly and disorderly, but at certain times and hours. And, therefore, he has ordained, by his supreme will and authority, both where, and by what persons, they are to be performed. They, therefore, who make their offerings [in the *Church*] at the appointed season, are happy and accepted ; because that, obeying the commandments of the Lord, they are free from sin. For, the *High Priest* has his proper services ; and to the *Priests* their proper place is appointed ; and to the *Levites* appertain their proper ministries ; and

the *lay-man* is confined within the bounds of what is commanded to lay-men."

From this whole passage it is evident, first, that *Clemens* inculcates upon the *whole* Church, (for the epistle is addressed to the whole) obedience and subordination in their respective stations. This, he says, is God's appointment, and therefore not to be dispensed with. He argues (as will be seen by consulting the whole epistle) from the evident subordination throughout the *whole natural world*; from the subordination every where observed in *military affairs*; and, lastly, from the subordination established by God himself in the Jewish church. The inference then necessarily must be (supposing *Clemens* to reason with any degree of propriety and force) that there must also be subordination in the Christian church. In an army, he says, there are different orders of officers—in the temple service, there are different orders; but, Sir, upon your hypothesis, in the Christian church, there is no difference of orders; and yet, you consider *Clemens* as arguing from this subordination of officers in an army and the Jewish church, to prove the necessity of subordination in the Christian church, in which, there is but one rank of officers. If you say, it is enough to make good *Clemens'* reasoning, that there be a distinction between the clergy and the laity; and that, upon this ground, he might exhort the *latter* to be obedient to the *former*, in all spiritual matters: I answer no; that is by no means sufficient. For

this epistle is directed to the whole church of *Corinth*; to the *clergy*, as well as to the *laity*. With respect to the *former*, therefore, it was in the main useless. There being no subordination of ranks among *them*, of course there were no superiors to be obeyed. The *laity* indeed might have been exhorted to obey their pastors, because God had made a distinction between them; but to urge this upon the clergy, by analogical reasoning, from a diversity of ranks among the officers of an army and the priests of the temple, when there was no difference of official rank in the Christian church, would, it appears to me, be too weak and inconclusive reasoning to be ascribed to *Clemens*. The argument has no kind of force, but as the *Christian* church in this respect resembles the *Jewish*. And this kind of analogical reasoning, must have been peculiarly forcible to those, who were so well acquainted with the ministries of the temple, as Christians were in the time of *Clemens*. Let us do all things, (to paraphrase the passage) “in order—let us regard times, and seasons, and persons—let all ranks in Christ’s church confine themselves to their proper stations—the *laity* to theirs; the High Priest (using the language of the temple) to his; the subordinate Priests to theirs; and the inferior ministers, the Levites, to theirs. This makes the whole consistent, pertinent, and conclusive.

It is an extremely irksome business to be obliged to notice every observation that an author makes,

or else be charged with not meeting him at all points. Were it not for this consideration, I should not notice the following observations.—“ As well might it be contended that *Clemens* would have the Christian church organized like an *army*; and that he recommends *four orders* of ministers, corresponding with the four classes of military officers, to which he alludes. How wonderful must be the prejudice that can make this use of an allusion! And above all, how weak and desperate must be that cause, which cannot be supported but by recurring to such means!”

To your declamation, Sir, I have nothing to say; but to what has some little appearance of reasoning, I thus reply.

There is not the same reason for supposing that *Clemens* would have four ranks of officers in the Christian church, because he mentions four in the *Roman army*; as there is for supposing that he would have three, because there were three in the Jewish church. I know, indeed, that in strict, logical reasoning, as *Clemens* mentions four ranks of officers in the *Roman army*, and three in the Jewish church, that it cannot be determined from these allusions, how many orders there are in the Christian church, whether four or three. But it is enough for my purpose, that *Clemens'* analogies imply a difference of orders; and *parity* being once destroyed by his mode of reasoning, there cannot be any doubt, whether the officers of the Christian

church compose four, or three orders. A difference of orders being once admitted, certainly, Sir, you can have no doubt, that it is the distinction of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, corresponding in gradations of rank with High Priest, Priest, and Levite.

This I think is quite sufficient to prove a diversity of ranks in the Christian, as there was in the Jewish church.

Your next passage from *Clemens* is the following: "In countries and cities where the Apostles preached, they ordained their first converts for Bishops and Deacons over those who should believe," &c. From this passage you infer, that there was but one order of ministers in the church, Presbyters, or Bishops.

Now let it be remembered, that in the time of *Clemens*, the title of Bishop was not appropriated to the first order, but was indiscriminately applied with that of Presbyter to the second. Then the orders of the church, according to this epistle, were Apostles, Presbyters or Bishops, and Deacons. This is beyond contradiction. The usual way of evading this, is, by asserting, that the Apostolic office, as to every thing of an extraordinary and miraculous nature, was to cease; and that as to their ordinary powers, the Apostles were perfectly on a level with the Presbyters of the church. That the Apostolic office in every thing of an extraordinary nature was to cease, is granted; but that in their permanent authority, the Apostles were on a level

with the Presbyters, I utterly deny. To say that they were, is to contradict all antiquity. The primitive Fathers acknowledged none to be the successors of the Apostles, in their reserved, ordinary powers of government, ordination, confirmation, and censure, but those whom they afterwards peculiarly called Bishops. And what *Clemens* says, is by no means inconsistent with this; for he knew very well that the Apostles, in their ordinary character, were superior to Presbyters and Deacons; and, therefore, from the enumeration, it appears that there were three orders of ministers in the church of Christ.

Before I conclude this head, it may be well to notice a trifling objection, or rather cavil, which is usually made by our opponents, when urged by the testimony of *Clemens*, in favour of different orders in the Christian ministry. They say, that he does not mention any Bishop at *Corinth*, when he wrote his epistle. That is undoubtedly true. Nor does he mention, that he himself was Bishop of *Rome* when he wrote; yet all antiquity assert the fact. The epistle runs in the name of the whole church of *Rome*, and is addressed to the whole church of *Corinth*. Of that church we have no records till the second century. Then we read in a fragment of the history of *Hegesippus*, preserved by *Eusebius*,* that *Primus* was Bishop of *Corinth* by succession. From that time, history takes notice of a

* Eccles. Hist. cap. xxii. p. 182.

chief pastor established over it; but we have no list of the names of the Bishops who governed that *see* during the first century. But who can doubt, that the church of *Corinth* had the same Episcopal establishment that *Ignatius*, a short time after, assures us all other churches had, “to the utmost bounds of the earth!”

I would observe further, that this arguing, or, to speak more properly, cavilling from the silence of an author, against any fact in question, can never be admitted without the most pernicious consequences. The scripture, and some of its most important institutions, would be materially affected by it. For instance—some have asserted, that the first institution of the Sabbath was by *Moses* in the wilderness; and they attempt to prove it by saying, that there is not the least hint in the *Pentateuch*, that it was kept by *Adam* and his posterity, till after the exit of the *Hebrews* from *Egypt*. Consequently, say they, when *Moses* speaks of that institution immediately after the creation, he speaks by way of anticipation. This is the opinion of *Paley*, *Heylin*, and others; but to me it appears a violent construction of the words of *Moses*. So again, in the case of the Christian Sabbath; there is no mention (say they,) in the *New Testament*, that it was instituted by Christ, or by his Apostles, under the direction of the Holy Spirit; and that is undoubtedly true; but it by no means follows, that it is a mere ecclesiastical in-

stitution, resulting from human prudence. From the silence of the scriptures, the *Socinians* also argue against the continuance of the sacrament of baptism in the church. Christ, say they, ordered his Apostles to baptize and disciple all nations ; but when converted to the faith, he does not command that the sacrament of baptism be continued ; and, therefore, it ought not to be administered after a nation becomes Christian. All this I take to be mere cavilling, and hardly deserving an answer. Exactly of a piece with it is the inference of our opponents, that the church of *Corinth* was not Episcopal, because there is no mention of a bishop in the epistle of *Clemens* ; when it appears from *Ignatius*, but a short time after, that all the world was Episcopal.

I have now produced all the testimonies from the Fathers, that appear to me necessary to establish the Apostolical institution of diocesan Episcopacy ; and I cannot but flatter myself, that the evidence is clear, positive, and decisive. It has been admitted to be so up to the middle of the second century, by our most learned opponents, *Blondel*, *Salmasius*, *Daille*, the *Westminster Assembly of Divines*, and others. And they admit, that the epistles of *Ignatius* are decidedly in favour of Episcopacy, and, by consequence, if they subscribed to their genuineness, they must give up the cause. I cannot think that it is any breach of charity to say, that this was the true motive of their opposition to these epistles. We are very apt to be satisfied with

very weak objections to the truth of what we wish to be false ; and with very slight reasons in favour of what we wish to be true. Good men as well as bad, are too much under the influence of this weakness ; and it often determines their judgment, when they have not the least suspicion of it. In this way, I reconcile my assertion with charity.

I have now, Sir, adduced a large portion of the evidence that is to be found in the primitive writers, in favour of *diocesan* Episcopacy ; and I think I may safely say, in the words of Bishop *Hoadly*, that “ we have as universal, and as unanimous a testimony of all writers and historians from the Apostles’ days, as could reasonably be expected or desired. Every one who speaks of the government of the church in any place, witnessing that Episcopacy was the settled form ; and every one who hath occasion to speak of the original of it, tracing it up to the Apostles’ days, and fixing it upon their decree ; and what is very remarkable, no one contradicting this, either of the friends or enemies of Christianity, either of the orthodox or heretical, through those ages, in which only such assertions concerning this matter of fact could well be disproved. From which testimonies I cannot but think it highly reasonable to infer, that Episcopacy was of *Apostolical institution*. Were there only testimonies to be produced, that this was the government of the church in all ages, it would be but reasonable to conclude it of *Apostolical institution* ; it

being so highly improbable that so material a point should be established without their advice or decree, when we find the churches consulting them upon every occasion, and upon matters not of greater importance than this. But when we find the same persons witnessing not only that the government of the church was *Episcopal*, but that it was of *Apostolical institution*, and delivered down from the beginning as such, this adds weight to the matter, and makes it more undoubted. So that here are two points to which they bear witness, that this was the government of the church in their days, and that it was of *Apostolical institution*. And in these there is such a constancy and unanimity, that even *St. Jerome* himself (who was born near two hundred and fifty years after the Apostles, and is the chief person in all that time whom the Presbyterians cite for any purpose of theirs) traces up Episcopacy to the very Apostles, and makes it of their institution; and in the very place where he most exalts Presbyters, he excepts *ordination* as a work always peculiar to Bishops. So that supposing there be nothing in the New Testament concerning the superiority of Bishops to Presbyters; and nothing of any confinement of the power of ordination to that *superior order*; yet there may be sufficient evidence of *Apostolical institution* from these testimonies. And if there be sufficient evidence of this, by what means soever it came to us, it ought to be received. Now, that *this* ought to

be accounted sufficient evidence by our brethren in this case, is plain from their receiving the same testimonies in another most important point, which is not, and could not be plainly settled in the scriptures themselves. For it is upon the testimony of ancient writers in all ages, that *they* as well as *we*, believe the books of the *New Testament* to have been extant from the Apostles' days; and to have been written by the Apostles, or by persons approved of by them. And this, indeed, makes me the more solicitous to establish the credibility of this testimony of the ancient church concerning Episcopacy, because I fear the objections with great zeal advanced against it, will be found at last to have a very bad influence upon all historical certainty, and to reach farther than they were designed, to the prejudice of what is of the last importance to the Christian church."* Thus reasons Bishop *Houdly*; and very powerful reasoning it is. It involves consequences of very high import, and, therefore, deserves your most serious consideration.

But it seems, Sir, that this clear and unanimous testimony of the whole church in the second, third, fourth, and all subsequent ages to the Apostolic institution of Episcopacy, is not enough to convince you. You want "a warrant which would be indubitable and satisfactory, if all books, excepting the Bible, were banished from the church."†

* Brief Defence of Episcopal Ordination, p. 10, 11, 12.

† Letter iii. p. 72.

This is really a most astonishing demand from a man of sense and learning. I could scarcely believe my eyes when I read it. Well, Sir, let us meet upon this point, and see what the result will be.

1. There are many passages in the Bible that cannot be explained, without *extraneous* information, without the knowledge of customs, manners, laws, judicatories, weights, measures, and a variety of other things. But these are not to be learned but from books. Of the meaning of all these passages, then, we must remain perfectly ignorant; for the supposition is, that there is not a book in the church but the Bible.

2. Upon this supposition, we could not have had the scriptures translated with any tolerable propriety. Indeed, I do not see how we could have had any translation of the New Testament; for the knowledge of *modern* Greek would not qualify any man to translate the Greek Testament. Something better might be done with the Hebrew Bible, as the language is still preserved among the Jews; but notwithstanding, without the knowledge of the cognate *Oriental* languages, the difficulties of translating would be exceedingly multiplied. These would be very serious evils.

3. If we had no other book in the world but the Bible, I cannot conceive how we are to determine the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred books. How are we to prove that the writings as-

cribed to *Peter, Paul, John, &c.* were of their inditing ; or that the present copy is a genuine transcript of the original manuscripts? Here we shall be completely aground. In this, as well as in other respects, the writings of the Fathers are of immense value ; and in a dispute with a deist, you would Sir, lay hold of them with avidity. But suppose the deist were to demand of you “ a warrant which would be indubitable and satisfactory, if all books, excepting the Bible, were banished from the church.” What would you say to this demand? Would you tell him, that you take it for granted, that all the succeeding copies of the original manuscripts are *sincere*, and free from every kind of corruption? You know very well, Sir, that he would treat such an answer with the most sovereign contempt, and that too with the utmost propriety. Here you would be involved in inextricable difficulty; your mouth would be stopped, and you would be obliged to yield the cause, without the possibility of making a reply. But this is not all; you could not, in the fourth place, maintain the grand evidences of Christianity.

The two pillars upon which the Christian fabric rests, are miracles and prophecies. The deist might ask you, How can you prove that any one prophecy in the Bible has been fulfilled? You cannot say, from historical evidence, for *that* your unreasonable demand precludes. Were he to demand of you a proof that the prophecies were not delivered after

the events, you have no proof to give him; for the Bible alone, upon your supposition, is to prove the fulfilment of its own prophecies. And as to miracles, the deist would ask you, how does it appear that the wonderful works recorded in the scriptures were ever performed? Who, he might say, ever saw them, and who has borne witness that they were ever wrought? Here again, you have shut your own mouth; for you have excluded the testimonies of the primitive writers. In short, Sir, your rejecting the voice of antiquity in favour of Episcopacy, does, in its genuine consequences, take out of our hands, "God's last, best gift to man," the revelation of his will by Jesus Christ, and by the first messengers of salvation, his holy Apostles.

These, Sir, are very dreadful considerations; resulting necessarily from your position, that the Bible alone, without any extraneous evidence or illustration, is quite sufficient for our guidance and direction.

Nor can you, Sir, take shelter under the general opinion of Protestant churches, and of the church of *England* in particular, that "whatsoever is not read in *holy scripture*, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite, or necessary to salvation." This I take to be sound doctrine when properly understood. This article of our church is levelled against the *Romish* doctrine, which maintains the necessity

of believing *oral* traditions, which, from the mode of conveyance, can never possess any character of authenticity. Besides, the absurdity of supposing that the Almighty would convey to us the terms of our salvation, partly by writing, and partly by oral tradition, partly in the surest way of conveying instruction to mankind, and partly in the most uncertain way imaginable. But to suppose, that the church meant to exclude every species of information that might throw light upon the Bible, is too preposterous to meet with a moment's reception.

2. This article of our church, distinguishes between doctrines as points of faith necessary to be believed in order to salvation, and matters of fact, which, though important, and by all means to be retained, yet, are not of the essence of religion. Thus, it is essential to salvation, that all who live where the light of revelation is diffused should believe; for "he that believeth not shall be damned." Again: It is essential to salvation that all men should repent; for "unless ye repent, ye shall all perish." Once more: It is essential to salvation, that all men should be holy; for "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." These virtues and graces constitute the very essence of the Christian religion; and, therefore, we may be well assured that they would be required in the most explicit, and positive terms, and not be left, in the smallest degree, to the uncertainty of *oral* tradition. Accordingly we find in the sacred scriptures, with re-

spect to these points, "line upon line, and precept upon precept;" so that "he who runs may read." But with respect to matters of fact of a particular character, or particularly circumstanced, there was no necessity for express precept; no necessity for explicit, positive declaration. Thus, with respect to the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, a positive precept, or an explicit declaration was altogether unnecessary; for Christians, in the first age, had only to open their eyes to see the Apostles sanctifying that holy day; and, no doubt, they had it from the lips of those inspired men, that they were directed either by the Holy Ghost, or by Christ himself, to change the day of rest; but of *that* we have no record. We must, therefore, depend entirely upon the testimony of the primitive church for that fact; and accordingly we have it to a sufficient degree. In like manner, we have no precept, nor express warrant for infant baptism; but we make it out to be a scriptural practice by reasoning, by analogy, and by circumstances affording a great degree of probability. When we add to these considerations the testimony of the primitive church, it appears to me, that the evidence is enough to satisfy every impartial mind; but precept, or express warrant, we have not from scripture. Again: the proof of the genuineness and authenticity of the sacred writings depends entirely upon the testimony of the primitive church, and there is no other possible way of set-

ting the canon of scripture. There is no precept, nor express warrant in the scripture itself, for receiving all the books of the Old and New Testament, which are deemed canonical; no, we must have recourse to testimony, and that testimony is altogether *extraneous*. The scriptures bear no express testimony to their own genuineness and authenticity; but if they did, it would be to no purpose; for the sincerity of the passages in which the testimony is comprehended, must be proved by external evidence. So that we cannot stir one step without the aid of the primitive church. In like manner, if we do not find any precept, nor express warrant in scripture for diocesan Episcopacy, yet, having the unanimous voice of the ancients in our favour, the evidence upon every principle of sound reasoning, ought to be deemed conclusive; and it appears to me, that if you reject this evidence, and insist upon precept, or express warrant, you must reject, in order to be consistent, the evidence for the change of the Sabbath, for the baptism of infants, for the canon of scripture, and, in short, the evidence for all past matters of fact.

But while I am thus contending, that the testimony of the primitive church is abundantly sufficient to prove the fact, that diocesan Episcopacy was of Apostolic institution, you certainly will not suppose that I mean to decline meeting you on Scripture ground. No, Sir; I readily and cheerfully pass within that sacred enclosure; and shall immediately

come to the point, after I have made two or three preliminary observations.

As Episcopacy appears from a cloud of witnesses to be the government of the church, at the close of the Apostolic age, it can never be admitted, that any thing in the New Testament militates against this fact. That would be a contradiction unparalleled in the history of mankind. It would place us in the most perplexing situation that can be conceived; for we must, if your hypothesis be true, either give up the passages in the New Testament relating to this point, or we must reject the highest degree of historical evidence, which, from the nature of the subject, is the only evidence we can have. Thus, sound historical evidence and inspiration would be set at variance; or, in other words, man as a Christian, must contradict himself as a reasonable being.—Now, Sir, for the scripture proofs.

The first proof of Episcopacy that I shall adduce from scripture, is furnished by the Epistles to the seven churches of *Asia Minor*. It is the general opinion of the learned, that *St. John* wrote the *Revelations* in the island of *Patmos*, in the year 95, and in the 14th of the reign of *Domitian*. At that time *Ignatius* was Bishop of *Antioch*, and had been for upwards of twenty years. We have seen what sort of Bishops those of *Ignatius* were; and this circumstance will, I think, assist us in settling the quality of the *Apocalyptic Angels*.

That those seven *Angels* were the Bishops of the seven *diocesan* churches of the *Proconsular Asia*, Episcopalians strenuously assert. Upon this point, you appear to me, as indeed every Presbyterian writer before you has been, greatly embarrassed. And in order to involve *us* in perplexity as well as *yourself*, you propose some questions. The first is, "Is it certain that by these *Angels* were meant individual ministers?" I think there can be no doubt of it. It is said expressly, that the *seven Stars are the Angels*: there were, therefore, just as many *Angels* as there were *Stars*. There were *seven* churches, and every church had its distinct and peculiar *Angel*. Besides, the descriptions of the *Angels* are not applicable to a multitude, unless we suppose that all the Presbyters of the respective churches deserved the same reproof, and the same commendations, which is inconsistent with the least degree of probability.

Again, you ask, "Supposing individuals to be meant, what is there in the word *Angel* which ascertains its meaning to be a *diocesan* Bishop?" I answer, there is nothing. We lay no stress whatever upon the title; but upon the address to the *Angels*, and upon the concurring testimony of the Fathers, that these *Angels* were the Bishops of their respective churches. They are addressed as having jurisdiction over both clergy and laity. This, even *Blondel* acknowledges. "The acts of the church," says he, "whether they were glorious or infamous,

were imputed to their *exarchs* or chief *governors*.* The *Angel* of the church of *Pergamos* is celebrated for his personal virtues ; yet some neglect was imputed to him as a *governor*. *I have a few things against thee* (saith the Lord). *Thou hast them who hold the doctrine of Balaam. So also them who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.* And he is severely threatened unless he repented ; which proves that he had authority to correct these disorders. The same may be said of the *Angel* of *Thyatira*, who is blamed for suffering “ *Jezebel*, who called herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce the people.” And the *Angel* of *Sardis* is commanded to “ *be watchful, and to strengthen those who are ready to die ;*” otherwise, our Lord threatens to come on him as *a thief in the night*. Since, then, these *Angels* had full power of reforming abuses ; since the neglect of reformation is entirely imputed to them ; and since there are none joined in commission with them, whose votes were necessary to enable them to act ; it is evident that they had the supreme power in their respective churches.

But, Sir, how will all this accord with your system ? When our Lord blamed and threatened the *Angel* of the church of *Sardis*, might he not have said, “ Lord, why blamest thou me ? I have no more authority in thy church in this city, than other Presbyters. We do every thing, as thou well

* Blond. Apol. Pref. p. 6. quoted by Burscough.

knowest, by a plurality of votes, and those Presbyters who wish for a majority, for the purpose of beginning the work of reformation, have not yet been able to obtain it. I need not tell thee, that I am no more than the *Moderator* of the Presbytery, appointed to count their votes and keep order. Upon what dictate then of reason, upon what principle of justice, am I to be blained for the defects and corruptions in the church? As a *Moderator*, I have no relation whatever to the *church*; my relation is entirely to the *Presbytery*, and there I have but a casting vote. What then can I do? Why am I addressed in particular, and threatened with excision, unless I repent? For my personal faults I humbly beg forgiveness; but I cannot possibly acknowledge any guilt as the *governor* of this church, when I bear no such character." Might not the *Angel* of *Sardis* have addressed Christ with the strictest propriety in this manner? And does not this show, how utterly inconsistent your scheme of church government is with these epistles? You might as well attempt to reconcile *it* with *them*, as to reconcile a *republic* with a *monarchy*.

But, upon our system, all is right. The seven *Angels* are so many individuals. They are blamed for certain corruptions in their respective churches; and their Presbyters and Deacons are not blamed in the least. The *Angels*, therefore, must have had power to correct these abuses, and must have had jurisdiction over these Presbyters and Deacons.

They must have had, as we have seen from *Ignatius* and others, the supreme power of the keys; and, consequently, the power of commissioning the inferior orders under their government. Hitherto, then, all is harmonious and consistent. The testimony of the Fathers, and the testimony of these scripture epistles is perfectly coincident. But, upon your hypothesis, the addresses to the Angels are inconsistent with common sense and common justice, and at utter variance with the testimony of the Fathers.

That the Fathers accounted the seven *Angels* so many *diocesan* Bishops, is beyond all contradiction. So say *Irenæus*,* *Clemens of Alexandria*,† *Eusebius*,‡ *Ambrose*,|| and others. That *Polycarp* was then Bishop of *Smyrna*, is testified by *Irenæus*, who knew him well, by *Ignatius*, by *Polycrates*, Bishop of *Ephesus*, who calls him Bishop, and *Martyr* in *Smyrna*, by *Eusebius*, by *Tertullian*, by *Jerome*, and by all antiquity. And *Ignatius* names *Onesimus* as Bishop of *Ephesus* when he wrote, which was but about twelve years after the inditing of these epistles. It being then so evident, that one of those to whom *St. John* writes under the name of *Angel*, was *Polycarp*, Bishop of *Smyrna*, and most probably, the other, *Onesimus*, Bishop of *Ephesus*, we may be sure that all the rest were Bishops of their respective churches, as well as *Polycarp*

* Iren. adv. Hær lib. ii. c. 3.

† De divit. Salv. Num. 42.

‡ Eccles Hist. lib. iii. c. 23.

|| Oa 1 Cor. xi.

and *Onesimus*. And let it be particularly noticed, that these Bishops, Bishops in the ecclesiastical sense of the word, having Presbyters and Deacons under their direction, as *Ignatius* testifies—Bishops who had the supreme jurisdiction, and, consequently, the power of commissioning the inferior orders in the church, are declared by our Lord himself to be, *stars in his own right hand*. This makes their office a *divine* appointment, and not, as you indiscretely assert, *an anti-Christian usurpation*.

Is it necessary to say any thing more upon this point? I really think it is not. Connecting the evidence from the epistles with the chain of evidence produced from the Fathers, we find the same uniform mode of government. As yet, we cannot perceive a single link in the chain wanting. No chasm appears; and, therefore, we are not reduced to the arduous, and indeed impracticable task, of accounting for a change from Presbytery to Episcopacy, in direct opposition to the well known principles of human nature, to the voice of history, and to every consideration which influences the minds of men, when examining the evidence of facts. That I am correct in the opinion, that a change of government was impracticable within a century or two after the Apostolic age, I shall show in some subsequent letter. And this will give me an opportunity of exhibiting to our readers, your very extraordinary tissue of fallacies, conjectures, and misrepresenta-

tions, in your eighth letter. That letter is really a master-piece of its kind.

Before I pass on to the next scripture proof for diocesan Episcopacy, it will be expedient to notice what you say of *Dodwell's* opinion concerning these *Angels*. You observe,* that "in his *Parænesis*, he explicitly renounces this opinion [that the *Angels* were the Bishops of the seven churches of the *proconsular Asia*.] And while he expresses much uncertainty with respect to the character of these *Angels*, and concedes the impossibility of deciding *who* they were [were this true, it is materially different from conceding *what* they were] he rather intimates his belief that they were *itinerary legates*, sent from *Jerusalem*, answering to the *seven spirits*, mentioned *Zech. iv. 10.*"

I really think, Sir, that, of all the writers I have ever met with, you are the most unfortunate in quoting authorities. That *you* have never read the *Parænesis* of *Dodwell*, I am well convinced: That *I* have never read it, I freely acknowledge. But, Sir, I have read his life by *Brokesby*. In that life, I find an *abstract* of all *Dodwell's* writings; in particular, I find that he had a singular notion with respect to the church of *Jerusalem*. He supposed that *St. James*, Bishop of *Jerusalem*, held a priority of dignity and jurisdiction over all Christian churches, till the destruction of *Jerusalem*. After

* Letter iii. p. 113.

that period, he supposes that *St. James'* superiority was transferred to the Bishop of *Ephesus*; and that *St. James* first, and afterwards the Bishop of that church, sent out *itinerate legates*, or Bishops, to propagate Christianity through the world. But "by degrees," says *Brokesby*, "this power came to be derived to the governors of other churches, as to the *Angels* of the *apocalyptic* churches."

This notion of *Dodwell's* is, I believe, strictly *singular*; for I have never read of any other Episcopalian that has adopted it. Learned, as well as unlearned, have their singularities; and *Dodwell* was by no means free from them. But singularities apart, it is evident from the above extract, that the pious and learned man in question, believed the *Angels* of the seven churches of *Asia Minor* to be fixed Bishops; and that was his opinion, as you yourself acknowledge, when, some years before, he wrote his book *on schism*.

The next scriptural proof of *diocesan* Episcopacy, is taken from the first epistle of *St. Paul* to *Timothy*. The superiority of a Bishop to a Presbyter consists in *potestas ordinis* and *potestas jurisdictionis*—the power of order, and the power of jurisdiction, as the schoolmen speak. As to the former, *the power of ordaining*, that is peculiar to the Bishop, and no instance has yet appeared of Presbyters exercising that power. *St. Paul* gives it as a special charge to *Timothy*, to *lay hands suddenly on no man*. This would have been a very useless charge, if the

Presbyters of *Ephesus* could have ordained ; and it was really treating them very disrespectfully, not so much as to give the least hint that they had a right to co-operate in that business. The same silence is observed by the Apostle in his epistle to *Titus*: *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest ordain Elders in every city.* From these texts the Fathers observe, that none but Bishops, in the ecclesiastical sense of the word, had the power of ordaining. So say *Cyprian*, *Epiphanius*, *Chrysostom*, *Jerome*, and several councils.

The next point, in which Bishops are superior to Presbyters, is *the power of jurisdiction*. That consists, first, in regulating divine service, and the administration of the sacraments. *St. Paul* gave *Timothy* this direction, that *first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and all that are in authority, that men may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.* And this power of regulating divine service, necessarily implies the chief power of administering the sacraments. Presbyters, indeed, have the power of administering the sacraments ; but not without authority from the Bishop. This we are expressly taught, by *Ignatius*, who was nearly contemporary with *Timothy*, and perfectly well acquainted with several, if not all the Apostles. Under this head, may be placed the Bishop's authority to prevent Presbyters from preaching false doctrine. *Charge them not to preach doc-*

trines which rather minister questions than godly edifying. But what was *Timothy* to do, if they did not obey his charge? He must stop their mouths; that is, silence them, as *Titus* was particularly directed to do. *A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition is to be rejected.* Who was to do this? *Titus*; not a word about Presbyters, or ruling Elders. *Calvin* agrees with this. *Tito scribens Paulus, non disserit de officio magistratus, sed quid Episcopo conveniat.** “*Paul*, writing, does not discourse of the office of a Magistrate, but of what is proper to a Bishop.” And *Jerome* declares, that this power belongs to the office of a Bishop. “*I wonder*” (says he, speaking of *Vigilantius*, who propagated false doctrines,) “that the Bishop in whose diocese he is a Presbyter, hath so long given way to his impiety; and that he hath not rather broken in pieces with the *Apostolic rod*, a rod of iron, this unprofitable vessel.”† This is the very rod which was put into the hands of *Timothy* and *Titus*. It was peculiar to the Bishop in *Jerome’s* day, and he calls it an *Apostolic rod*; and, consequently, it was no usurpation.

The third and last particular of Episcopal jurisdiction, is the correction of immorality, so far as it can be done by ecclesiastical censure. Both Presbyters and people, in this respect, were subject to the Bishop. *St. Paul* says to *Timothy*, *Against*

* In Tit. c. 3.

† Hieron. ad Riparium adv. Vigilant.

an Elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses; and, them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. Presbyters then are subject to censure; but to whose? To their brethren's? Not a word of that; but to their Bishop's, to *Timothy's*. The laity also were subjected to *Timothy's* correction. An elderly man, he was to *entreat as a father*; the younger men were to be rebuked with greater freedom, but still with lenity.

Thus, the Apostle minutely enumerates the several powers in the commission, with which *Timothy* was invested. And as if this were not enough, he particularly defines the limits of those powers which were conferred upon the Presbyters. When he met them at *Miletus*, he gave them this solemn charge: *Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* Here is not the least intimation to these Presbyters, that their commission implied the power of ordaining: nothing, but to take care of their own conduct, and to feed with the word of life those over whom they were placed. But *St. Paul* gives very particular directions to *Timothy*, concerning the persons whom he should ordain, both Presbyters and Deacons. Is it not wonderful, that when he was about to take his leave for ever of those Presbyters, he did not say one word to them about so important a part of their duty as ordaining, if they possessed that power? "When

he gives his charge to *Timothy*," says Bishop *Hoadly*, "it is in plain words, that he is to govern and ordain Presbyters: When he gives his charge to these Presbyters, it is to feed the flock of lay-Christians. Let any one observe the difference, and judge, whether these Presbyters were ever designed for the same offices for which *Timothy* had been set over them."

Again: "That *Timothy* did," says *Hoadly*, "after this, govern and ordain at *Ephesus*, and not these Presbyters, is plain from *St. Paul's second epistle* to him; in which he is supposed in the same office as in the *first*; and the like injunctions, though in more general terms, repeated concerning his behaviour in it. From whence, I think it evident beyond all contradiction, that *St. Paul* did not, at this time, once think of leaving the whole government, and the matter of ordination, in the hands of these Presbyters. For if that were his design and solemn act in this charge, what occasion, or what foundation could there be for him, afterwards, to take these rights away again? And how various must his judgment, and how unbecoming his behaviour appear, [and I will add, how inconsistent with the notion of his being *inspired*,] to be perpetually thus changing, first giving to Presbyters the right of ordination, then immediately restraining it; then solemnly restoring to them the right of it when he was taking his final leave; and afterwards putting the same restraint upon them again. This is in-

credible. And yet this must be supposed, if there be any thing implied in the text now before us, to the purpose of the Presbyterian cause."*

To conclude : *St. Paul* gives a very solemn charge to *Timothy*. *I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment, without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

St. Paul knew very well that *Timothy* would not live till the day of judgment. This charge, therefore, was not confined to the person of *Timothy*, but extended to the office which he held at *Ephesus*, and which, to make sense of the passage, we must suppose was designed to be continued to the end of time. It was of the nature of that promise which Christ made to his Apostles, that he *would be with them to the end of the world*. But the charge given by the Apostle to the Elders of *Ephesus*, was altogether personal ; it extended not beyond their own lives. As they had no power to constitute others in their room, so there is no charge given to them *to keep what was committed to them to the coming of Christ, or, to commit what they had received to faithful men.*

That the office which *Timothy* held did not expire with him, is evident from its very nature ; for

* Brief Def. p. 121, 122, 123.

there is the same need of an officer now in the church who can ordain, as there was in the days of *Timothy*; and accordingly we find from the testimony of antiquity that he had his successors. But with the Presbyterian hypothesis, all these circumstances are palpably inconsistent.

Now, Sir, were I called upon to point out the superior powers of a Bishop in our day, it would be in the words of *St. Paul* to *Timothy* and *Titus*. I would say, that he alone ordains, that he has the chief power in the administration of the word and sacraments, and that in the last resort, he has the power of inflicting spiritual censures upon both clergy and people. If this superiority constitutes a bishop in our day, what reasons can be assigned, why it did not constitute *Timothy* and *Titus*, Bishops? Oh! the reasons burst thick upon us.

First, "*Timothy* and *Titus* are no where in scripture called Bishops." Do you intend, Sir, by this to amuse, or to instruct your readers? If they *had* been so called, would you, on that account, allow them a superiority over Presbyters? You certainly would not. If you will not allow it when facts are staring you in the face, you assuredly would not on account of an ambiguous title. Names are not always to be depended upon; things always are. If *Timothy* and *Titus* had the powers of a Bishop, according to the infallible word of God, of what consequence is it what they are named? As Presbyters were styled *Bishops* or *Overseers*, because

they had a portion of *the flock* committed to them, *Timothy* and *Titus* who had both clergy and people committed to their charge, would, of course, have the title of $\pi\rho\omicron\varsigma\tau\omega\varsigma$, or ruler, or president. "Obey (says the Apostle to the *Hebrews*) those who have the rule over you." But what, Sir, if they also had the title of Apostles? Does not that imply as much as the appellative, *Bishop*? Then they certainly had it. *St. Paul* says, that there were Apostles ordained by *men*, as well as those who were immediately sent by *Jesus Christ*. *Barnabas* was one, *Epaphroditus* another, *Titus* another. "Whether any do inquire of *Titus*, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you; or our brethren be inquired of, they are the Apostles of the churches, and the glory of Christ." The word Αποστολοι is indeed translated *messengers*; but that cannot be the meaning when applied to the above named persons; for they were styled *Apostles of the churches* before they went to *Corinth*, from which they were to be dispatched with contributions to *Jerusalem*. Their *Apostolate* was evidently relative to their own churches; for *Titus* as a messenger carried the contribution, not of *Crete*, but of *Corinth*, and *Epaphroditus*, not that of the *Philippians*, but of the *Colossians*, and consequently, the Apostle could not, with propriety, say of *Epaphroditus*, *your messenger*. Besides, they are styled by *St. Paul*, his fellow-labourers and the glory of the church, which would hardly have been said of them, if they had not

sustained some very high character in the church of Christ.

I cannot see, Sir, why you should have any difficulty in acknowledging that *Timothy* and *Titus*, and others who presided over churches, were named Apostles, when *Barnabas* certainly was, and *St. Paul* tells us, that there were Apostles ordained by *men*, as well as by *Jesus Christ*. And, further, if the power of ordaining and a supremacy of jurisdiction, which, we say, the Apostles reserved to themselves, never communicating them to Presbyters, so far as scripture and antiquity inform us, were conferred upon *Timothy* and *Titus*, which is as clear as if written with a sun-beam, then certainly, when raised to the rank of Apostles by the powers communicated to them, they would be styled Apostles, as well as rulers, or presidents of churches. That this was the opinion of the ancients, you very well know. *Clemens of Alexandria, Hilary, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Jerome, Primasius*, all declare it to be so. And it probably continued to be given to the immediate successors of the Apostles, till about the close of the first century, when the appellation, *Bishop*, was appropriated to them.

Another of your observations is, that the authority which *Timothy* and *Titus* exercised at *Ephesus* and *Crete*, was in consequence of their being *Evangelists*. Now, an Evangelist, says *Eusebius*, “was sent to lay the foundation of the faith in barbarous nations;” that is, as the etymology of the word im-

plies, to preach *glad tidings*, or convey *good news* to the heathen. But this does not determine the *order* of the person who conveyed the *good news*. It might be done, and was done, by Apostles, Presbyters and Deacons, and even laymen. According to your own account, when you send out a Presbyter to preach the gospel to the heathen, you call him an *Evangelist*; and with great propriety. So, were the rulers of our church to send a Bishop, or a Presbyter, or a Deacon, to communicate to the heathen the *good news* of salvation, he would, in the strictest sense, be to them an *Evangelist*; but it would be absurd merely from this circumstance, to determine his rank in the church.

Again:—In this strict sense of the word, *Timothy* and *Titus* were not *Evangelists* to the *Ephesians* and *Cretians*; for *St. Paul* tells us, that he had spent three years in preaching the *glad tidings* of the gospel to the people of the proconsular *Asia*; and from the scripture it is evident that there was a church in *Crete*; so that *Timothy* was no *Evangelist*, in the strict sense of the word, to the *Ephesians*, nor *Titus* to the *Cretians*. There is a wider sense indeed, in which they were so; that is, simply as they were preachers of the gospel; but in that sense, all preachers are *Evangelists*, whatever their order may be. View this objection then in whatever light you please—extract from it all that you possibly can; and still it will amount to nothing but idle cavil. The fact that *Timothy* and *Titus*

were at the head of their respective churches, presiding over Presbyters, Deacons, and laity, will stare you in the face, and no art whatever can diminish the clearness of the evidence.

Another of your objections is, that “*Timothy* and *Titus* were not settled pastors, but itinerant missionaries. They sustained no fixed or permanent relation to the churches of *Ephesus* or *Crete*.” Were this strictly true, still it would be nothing to the purpose. Whatever time *Timothy* staid at *Ephesus*, he ordained Elders, governed those Elders, and regulated all the affairs of the church. This proves his superiority. Now, if it was necessary to send such an officer to *Ephesus* as *Timothy*, to ordain Elders where there were Elders before, it must have been equally necessary when he left it, that an officer of his rank should take his place for the same purpose. And, accordingly, we find from the ancients that that was really the case; 1. From a fragment of a treatise by *Polycrates*, Bishop of *Ephesus*, towards the close of the second century. This fragment is preserved in *Photius’ Bibliotheca*, and quoted by Archbishop *Usher* in his discourse on Episcopacy. In that fragment it is said, that “*Timothy* was ordained Bishop of *Ephesus* by the great *Paul*.” 2. It appears from *Eusebius*,* who says, “it is recorded in history (not merely reported, as you translate ἱστοριῶται) that *Timothy* was the first

* Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 4.

Bishop of *Ephesus*." 3. From the *Commentary* under the name of *Ambrose*.* He says, "Being now ordained a Bishop, *Timothy* was instructed by the *epistle* of *Paul*, how to dispose and order the church of God." 4. From *Epiphanius*,† who says, "The Apostle, speaking to *Timothy*, being then a Bishop, advises him thus,—"*Rebuke not an Elder*," &c. 5. By *Jerome*, who, in his tract of *ecclesiastical writers*, says, that "*Timothy* was ordained Bishop of the *Ephesians* by the blessed *Paul*." 6. By *Chrysostom*,‡ who says, "*Paul* directs *Timothy* to fulfil his ministry, being then a Bishop; for that he was a Bishop appears from *Paul*'s writing thus to him, '*Lay hands suddenly on no man*.'" 7. By *Leontius*,§ Bishop of *Magnesia*, one of the Fathers in the great council of *Chalcedon*, who declared, that "from *Timothy* to their time, there had been twenty-six Bishops of the church of *Ephesus*." 8. By *Primasius*,|| who says, "*Timothy* was a Bishop; and had the gift of prophecy with his ordination to the Episcopate." 9. By *Theophylact*,¶ who gives this reason for *St. Paul*'s writing to *Timothy*, "because that in a church newly constituted, it was not easy to inform a Bishop of all things incident to his place by word of mouth;" and in his *Commentary* on the fourth chapter of the first epistle, he styles *Timothy*, *Bishop*. 10. By *Occume-*

* Præfat. in Epist. ad Tim.

† Hær. 75. n. 5.

‡ Hom. 1 ad Tim. et in Præfat.

§ Con. Chal. Act. ii.

|| In Tim. 1 Ep. i. c. 4.

¶ In Præfat. 1 Tim.

nus,* who, on these words, *I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus*, gives this gloss,—“He ordained him Bishop.” The evidence upon this point is so complete, that it obliged even *Beza*† to confess that “*Timothy* was president (προεστως) of the *Ephesine* Presbytery, and that he had authority to receive accusations and complaints against a Presbyter, and to judge accordingly.”‡ But how childish is this! As if the *name* would alter the *thing*.

This is a very different statement from yours. Ah, my good Sir! how easy is it to withhold evidence, to assert roundly, and to give a specious turn to almost any thing!

But, Sir, notwithstanding the positiveness with which you assert, that *Timothy* and *Titus* had no permanent relation to the churches of *Ephesus* and *Crete*, I shall take the liberty of asking you, who told you so?—“The scriptures. We find *Timothy* travelling with *Paul* to *Philippi* and *Thessalonica*,” &c. That is very true; but had you considered that all these journies were finished before *Timothy* was appointed Bishop of *Ephesus*, you would never have made the objection. There is not the least evidence from scripture, nor from the Fathers, that *Timothy* ever left *Ephesus* for any length of time, except when *St. Paul* sent for him to *Rome* a little before his martyrdom. After that event, we hear no more of *Timothy*. His short absence at

* 1 Tim. c. i.

† Anot. 1 Tim. c. v. ver. 19.

‡ See Heylin on Episcopacy, p. 219, 220.

Rome till the fate of his *spiritual* father was determined, can never be considered by any impartial person as an objection to his *permanent* residence.

I have said that *Timothy's* journeys as an *Evangelist* were finished, before he was settled at *Ephesus*. To prove this, and, at the same time, to show that there were Elders at *Ephesus* when *Timothy* was appointed Bishop, it will be necessary to determine when that appointment took place. This will appear with sufficient evidence from *St. Paul's* first epistle to *Timothy*, in which we find these words—"I besought thee to abide still at *Ephesus* when I went into *Macedonia*." Now, *St. Paul's* journey into *Macedonia* is not that mentioned *Acts* xvi. for *then* there was no church of *Ephesus* existing. *Paul* did not visit that city till a good while after. Nor could it be when he left *Ephesus* to go the second time into *Macedonia*, of which mention is made in the 20th chapter; for then he sent *Timothy* and *Erastus* before him. But it was after he had stayed three months in *Greece*, when hearing that the *Jews* laid wait for him as he went about to sail into *Syria*, he changed his course, and determined to return through *Macedonia*. Then it was (so far as we can judge from the very short accounts we have) that he besought *Timothy* to undertake the government of the church of *Ephesus*. To which, when *Timothy* agreed, he went forward with *Aristarchus* and the rest, waiting at *Troas* in expectation of the Apostle's coming. Then it was,

most probably, that *Timothy* received the Apostle's first epistle, being written not from *Laodicea*, as the subscription pretends, but from *Macedonia*, as you observe, after *Athanasius* and *Theodoret* among the *ancients*, and several eminent modern commentators. For, however the Apostle hoped to be with him shortly ; yet, well knowing that untoward accidents might prevent it, he thought proper to send that letter of instructions to him, that he *might know how to behave himself in the house of God*. After that, there is not the least appearance that *St. Paul* ever employed *Timothy* in any general business of the church ; or, that he was ever absent from *Ephesus*, except as before mentioned, during the short time he spent with the Apostle at *Rome*. So little support have you from scripture, that *Timothy* had no permanent relation to the church of *Ephesus*.

By settling the time of *Timothy's* appointment to the *see* of *Ephesus*, we have secured another point, which you represent as *assumed* by us without any proof ; that is, that there were *Elders* at *Ephesus* before *Timothy's* appointment. I should suppose, that no one could possibly doubt of that, if there was no mention made of it, when he considers that *Paul* assures us, that he had spent three years preaching the gospel throughout that region. To suppose that there were no Presbyters ordained during that time, when there were so many thousands converted to the faith, is one of those *mon-*

strous presumptions, which candid and impartial men will not admit. But, Sir, we have no need to have recourse to *a priori* reasoning. The fact is clear enough. *Timothy*, after he was commissioned by *St. Paul* to govern the church of *Ephesus*, went before him to *Troas*, at which place *Paul* arrived from *Philippi*, in *five days*. They stayed there *seven*, *Timothy* going by water, and *Paul* by land, to *Assos*, where *Paul* embarked, and proceeded to *Miletus*. At that place, the Apostle sent for the Presbyters of *Ephesus* and the neighbouring region. Here, then, we find Elders, before *Timothy* had entered upon his charge; and we find *St. Paul* left *Miletus* without *Timothy*, and proceeded on his voyage to *Jerusalem*, where he was apprehended, and sent a prisoner to *Rome*. After some time, he sent for *Timothy*, who, by the second letter, we see, was at *Ephesus*. After *Paul's* death, we hear no more of *Timothy* in the scripture; and but little in the Fathers; but that little reports him to have been martyred at *Ephesus*. And we have just produced abundant evidence from the *ancients*, that he had his successors. Here then we have such a degree of proof on the Episcopal side of this question, as could hardly be expected, considering the very short accounts we have in scripture concerning the first settlement of churches.

With respect to *Titus*, whom the *ancients* make the first Bishop of *Crete*, it may not be so easy a matter to determine when his appointment took

place ; nor is it of any consequence to our cause, after settling the point with respect to *Timothy*. “ For this purpose,” says the Apostle, “ left I thee in *Crete*,” &c. *Baronius** conjecture is very probable. He thinks it was when *St. Paul* went from *Macedonia* to *Greece* through the *Egean Sea*. If so, *Titus*’s travels were nearly over. We find him, indeed, afterwards at *Nicopolis*, and after that at *Rome*, for the purpose of seeing the Apostle before his death. There he left *St. Paul*, and went into *Dalmatia*; whether, for the purpose of returning by rather a circuitous rout to *Crete*, or for whatever purpose, it is impossible to say. One thing, however, we are assured of by the *ancients*, that he was the first Bishop of *Crete*. So says *Eusebius*.† *Ambrose* also says, “ The Apostles consecrated *Titus* a Bishop, and, therefore, admonishes him to be solicitous for the church committed to him.”‡ *Jerome*, writing on these words, “ For this cause left I thee in *Crete*,”|| thus applies them : “ Let Bishops who have the power of ordaining Presbyters, attend to this.” Hence it is evident, that *Jerome* must have deemed him a Bishop with such powers as Bishops had in his day ; the chief of which was *ordination*. And in his catalogue of *ecclesiastical writers*, he says, that “ *Titus*, the Bishop of *Crete*, preached the gospel both in that and the neighbouring islands.” *Theodoret* says, “ *Titus*, a famous

* Ap. lvii. p. 209.

† Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. c. 4.

‡ Præfat. ad Tit.

|| In Tit. c. i. v. 5.

disciple of *St. Paul*, was by him ordained Bishop of *Crete*; being a place of great extent; with a commission also to ordain Bishops under him.”* *Theophylact*, in his preface to this epistle, affirms the same. *Occumenius* upon the text, says, “*St. Paul* gave *Titus* authority to ordain Bishops, having first made him a Bishop.”† Here then is sufficient evidence, that *Titus* was the first Bishop of *Crete*; and that he had successors to the same preeminence which he possessed, will admit of no dispute.

With respect to there being Presbyters at *Crete*, when *Titus* was set over the church in that island, we may very reasonably suppose it; yet, as the scripture does not mention it, you are determined not to allow it; nor is it, Sir, of any consequence whether you do or not. It is proved with respect to *Timothy*; but if it had not been, it would make no difference with respect to his office. We have produced abundant evidence that *Timothy* and *Titus* were the first Bishops of *Ephesus* and *Crete*, and that they had their successors; and from the epistles it appears, that after they had ordained Elders, they were to govern them, and all orders in their respective churches. This is the point we wish to establish, and I think it is completely established.

Your other objections shall be considered in my next letter.

* See Heylin. of Epist. p. 221.

† Ibid.

LETTER X.

REV. SIR,

I SHALL now resume my answers to your objections. Previously, I would observe, that there is nothing more easy than to start difficulties with respect to the best authenticated facts, and the most universally received opinions. There is not a single principle of religion, whether natural or revealed, to which plausible objections may not be made; nor is there any fact around which ingenuity may not spread a mist. It is unnecessary for me to give a detail of the instances of this kind: Nay, Sir, you yourself are a proof of what ingenuity can do in this sort of management. I have given sufficient evidence of the correctness of this assertion. I have shown, that what you very positively call facts, have not the least pretension to that character; and that what you object to the evidence of Episcopacy, in the second and third centuries, is mere cavil and evasion. You give us another proof of this in the quotation which follows. You say, "Admitting, for the sake of argument, that there were Presbyters ordained and residing both at *Ephesus* and *Crete*, previous to the respective

missions of *Timothy* and *Titus*, still no advantage to the Episcopal cause can be derived from this concession. We learn from the epistles directed to those Evangelists, that divisions and difficulties existed in both the churches to which they were sent. Among the Christians at *Ephesus* there had crept in *ravenous wolves*, who annoyed and wasted the flock; and also some who had *turned aside unto vain jangling, desiring to become teachers of the law without understanding what they said, or whereof they affirmed.*" And nearly the same account is given of the church of *Crete*; from which, you think it a probable inference, that the Presbyters themselves were "involved in the disputes and animosities which prevailed; and that it was therefore necessary to send *special missionaries* to set in order the affairs of those churches." Now, if the necessity of sending *missionaries* arose from the Presbyters being involved in the contentions, (which, however, is altogether supposition) you pay *Presbyterian* government but a very poor compliment; for it seems, according to your account of the matter, that such a mode of government is by no means adequate to the exigences of the church. This was your friend *Jerome's* opinion, and it appears that you have at length discovered his meaning, and made it your own. Well, Sir, I have no objection.

Further: It seems, when there were Presbyteries completely organized in those churches, that

the Apostle sent persons invested with superior powers “to curb the unruly” Presbyters, “to reclaim the wandering” among them, “to repress the ambition of those who wished to become *teachers*, or to thrust themselves into the *ministry*, without being duly qualified; to select and ordain others of more worthy character; and, in general, to *set in order* the affairs of those churches.” If all this does not prove the superiority of those *special missionaries* over the *Presbyteries* of the churches of *Ephesus* and *Crete*, it is hard to say what does.

But these are not the only difficulties in which your theory involves you. By your hypothesis, *Presbyterian* government is of *divine institution*. Yet it seems, very shortly after the Apostles, under the influence of divine inspiration, had established that government, it became totally inadequate to the purposes for which it was instituted. If this be not a severe censure upon the wisdom of inspired Apostles, I do not know what is.

Still further: *Timothy* and *Titus*, if we may believe the unanimous testimony of the ancients, had successors in the authority which they exercised in the churches of *Ephesus* and *Crete*. Then the authority which they exercised over the *Presbyteries* of their respective churches was conveyed to others; and consequently, Episcopacy is an Apostolic institution.

It is a very natural reflection from all this, that when men leave the plain path of truth, palpable

error, and inextricable difficulties are the inevitable consequence.

Your fifth remark, which, you say, “invalidates the argument under consideration,” is the following. “We know not that either *Timothy* or *Titus* alone ordained a single Presbyter, at *Ephesus* or *Crete*.” Is it possible, that this should have come from your pen? You tell us, that there is no evidence that there were Presbyters at *Ephesus* or *Crete*; and yet that *Timothy* and *Titus* were sent upon an *ordaining tour*. In the name of common sense, how could they have had any Presbyters to assist them, when, if you are right, there were none at *Ephesus* or *Crete*? A man, when he deals much in *surmises*, ought to have, at least, a good memory; otherwise, the probability is that he will run himself into gross and palpable inconsistencies.

You go on: “The whole force of the Episcopal argument depends upon taking for granted, that each of those missionaries was, alone, vested with the whole ordaining and governing power, in the diocese supposed to be assigned him.” Now, I leave it to every impartial reader, whether, if as you suppose, there were no Presbyters at *Ephesus* and *Crete*, when *Timothy* and *Titus* went to their respective charges; and when the scriptures do not give us the slightest hint, that they took any with them; whether, I say, we have not a right to conclude, that they were the *sole* ordainers, and whether you have any right to *surmise* that they took

Presbyters with them; and particularly, as the epistles, in all the directions relating to ordinations, say not one syllable about Presbyters having a right to ordain? If groundless *surmises* are to be set in opposition to the evidence, both from scripture and antiquity, that *Timothy* and *Titus* presided over the churches of *Ephesus* and *Crete* with Episcopal powers, it is perfectly idle to dispute upon the subject. *Facts* are just what men please to fancy such; and *surmise* is proof when it suits the reader.

Your seventh remark, relating to the journeys of *Timothy* and *Titus*, which, as you imagine, disqualifies them from being Bishops, has, I flatter myself, been completely answered in the preceding letter.

Your final remark upon the case of *Timothy* and *Titus*, has in it something specious; but it is totally destitute of solidity.

The substance of the remark is, that if *Timothy* and *Titus* were diocesan Bishops, then the Apostles sustained a still higher office; and, consequently, there are *four* orders in the church instead of *three*. You had previously reasoned in the same manner in page 92.

A few words will show the fallacy of this. The Bishops of our church consecrate A. B. a Bishop for the state of *Georgia*. After his departure for his diocese, sensible of the many difficulties he will have to contend with, they jointly address an epistle

to him, in which they give him advice on every point that may occur—charge him in a solemn manner to *lay hands suddenly on no man—to receive no accusation against an Elder but before two or three witnesses—to reject a man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition—to take heed to himself and to his doctrine*, and a number of other injunctions; would all this prove that they were of a different order from the newly consecrated Bishop? Certainly not.

Besides, let it be remembered, that the Apostles, in delivering to the world the mind of Christ, and in regulating every thing essential either to the *being or well being* of the church, were directed by the *Holy Ghost*; and then it will be evident from the very nature of the case, that Bishops, as well as Presbyters, were to be instructed by them; but this did not make the Apostles of a superior order to Bishops. It is different orders of the ministry that we are speaking of, and, with these, inspiration had no necessary connection. Laymen were inspired as well as the Apostles. *St. Luke* has delivered to us the mind of Christ; but yet, so far as we know, he never was admitted into any clerical order. Bishops, as well as Presbyters, Deacons, and Laymen, were obliged to receive his gospel as of divine inspiration; but that gave that Evangelist no authority over the clergy. The circumstance then of Bishops being obliged to submit to the in-

structions and directions of the Apostles, was of an extraordinary nature, springing out of the state of things, and therefore ceasing with that state.

But the case was quite different with respect to the Apostles' jurisdiction and authority over Presbyters. It was a strict and proper jurisdiction, founded not simply in the inspiration of the Apostles as with respect to the Bishops, but in their superior *sacerdotal* character. The whole power of the ministry was lodged with the Apostles: this plenitude of clerical power was communicated to the Bishops, but not to the Presbyters. This plenitude of power made the Bishops equal with the Apostles in their ordinary, permanent authority, and superior to the Presbyters; inasmuch, as but a part of that power was communicated to *them*. This was the foundation of the authority which the Apostles exercised over the Presbyters; but with respect to the Bishops, it had no existence. The Bishops were inferior to the Apostles, not in point of clerical order, but in respect to miraculous powers; the Presbyters (at least many of them) were inferior in both respects.

By this simple distinction, manifest enough in the scriptures, particularly in the epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, to whom, I flatter myself, it has been fully proved, this plenitude of Apostolic, sacerdotal power was communicated by *St. Paul*, and also from the whole current of the primitive writers as they have been exhibited in the preceding letters;

by this simple distinction, I say, your specious dilemma proves perfectly harmless.

It is really, Sir, wasting time to make a reply to so many frivolous surmises, when the question between us is a simple matter of fact, to be determined by scripture and the primitive writers. The sole question is, whether the Apostles communicated that plenitude of sacerdotal power which they received from Christ, to the Presbyters; or restricted them to a portion of it; communicating the whole of it to those, who, from the close of the Apostolic age, have been styled Bishops. No evidence has yet appeared that they communicated the whole of it to Presbyters; but, on the contrary, I think that the most complete evidence has been exhibited, that Bishops were the depositaries of that plenitude of power; and that, consequently, they are an order superior to Presbyters. If this be the case, a thousand surmises and conjectures are not of the least weight; but if that has not been fully proved from the primitive writers and the scripture, you need not amuse your readers with *suppositions*: the fact must be evident, either the one way or the other, from what has been exhibited, either by you or by me.

The sum of what has been said upon the cases of *Timothy* and *Titus*, is this:—It has been proved, that they were sent to *Ephesus* and *Crete* to ordain Presbyters and Deacons, and to govern those officers as well as the laity, in all spiritual matters;—that

those officers, from the powers of ordaining and governing, were necessarily superior to Presbyters ; that *Timothy* and *Titus* were the stationary Bishops of their respective churches ; the former having never been absent that we know of, but on a short visit to *St. Paul* before his martyrdom, and the latter absent no longer than on a visit to the Apostle at *Nicopolis* and at *Rome* : but if *Timothy* and *Titus* had made but a short stay at *Ephesus* and *Crete* ; yet, exercising the powers which they did in those churches, they were Bishops at large. But what proves to a certainty that they were fixed Bishops, as much so, at least, as the exigences of the church in that day would admit, is the circumstance of their having successors in the very same authority which they exercised at *Ephesus* and *Crete* ; and for the proof of this, numerous testimonies have been adduced from the Fathers. It has also been shown, that it was not as *Evangelists* they acted at *Ephesus* and *Crete* ; for an *Evangelist* was one who carried *good news* of salvation to the heathen ; but the people of *Ephesus* and *Crete* had been converted in great numbers to the faith of Christ, before the appointment of *Timothy* and *Titus*. The result of the whole then is, that these officers were Bishops in the appropriate, ecclesiastical sense of the word.

Before I conclude this part of the discussion, I shall make a few observations upon your quotation from *Dr. Whitby*. You say,* this commentator,

* Letter iii. p. 97.

“notwithstanding all his zeal for Episcopacy, speaks on the subject in this manner. ‘The great controversy concerning this, [the *epistle* to *Titus*] and the *epistle* to *Timothy*, is, whether *Timothy* and *Titus* were indeed made Bishops, the one of *Ephesus*, and the proconsular *Asia*; the other of *Crete*. Now, of this matter, I confess I can find nothing in any writer of the first three centuries, nor any intimation that they bore that name.’ And afterwards he adds, generally concerning the whole argument—‘I confess that these two instances, absolutely taken, afford us no convincing arguments in favour of a settled diocesan Episcopacy, because there is nothing which proves they did, or were to exercise these acts of government rather as *Bishops* than as *Evangelists*.” But why, Sir, did you not give us the whole of *Whitby*’s words? After he had said, “I can find nothing in any writer of the first three centuries, nor any intimation that they bore that name”—the name of Bishop; why did you not add the following words, “But this defect is abundantly supplied by the concurrent suffrage of the fourth and fifth centuries?” He then gives us a number of testimonies from writers of those ages; and which I have already given in the preceding letter. He begins with *Eusebius*, who says that “it is related, or recorded in history [*ιστορειται*] that *Timothy* and *Titus* were the first Bishops of *Ephesus* and *Crete*.”

And as to *Whitby*’s saying that “these two in-

stances, taken absolutely, will not afford convincing proof, that *Timothy* and *Titus* acted as *Bishops* rather than as *Evangelists*;" he evidently means by the word *absolutely*, *unconnected with the testimonies of the ancients*; for it is by these testimonies, and by these alone, from the very circumstances of the case, that we can know that *Timothy* and *Titus* had *successors*. Had not those officers been succeeded by men, who exercised the same powers at *Ephesus* and *Crete* which they did; then, of course, that authority ceased, and they were not *diocesan* Bishops. But as that authority *did not cease*, as appears from every record of antiquity that mentions this point, it follows irresistibly, that *Timothy* and *Titus* acted as *diocesans*.

When *Whitby* says, that we have no testimony from any writer in the first three centuries in confirmation of the point in dispute, he certainly never meant to assert, that the testimonies of the fourth and fifth, and the following ages, do not rest upon sufficient authority. No; he meant quite the contrary; for he says, that those testimonies are quite sufficient to prove that *Timothy* and *Titus* were Bishops of *Ephesus* and *Crete*; and he knew perfectly well, that *Eusebius* mentions it as *a matter of historical record*, that they were so. The learned *Jerome* also is positive upon this point.

Thus, Sir, if you had given a fair and candid account of Dr. *Whitby's* sentiments, you would

have found the quotations with which you have favoured us, in no degree friendly to your cause.

I shall now dismiss this part of the controversy, and discuss the transaction at *Antioch*, which you represent as an ordination by Presbyters.* “Now there were in the church that was at *Antioch* certain prophets and teachers, as *Barnabas*, and *Simeon* that was called *Niger*, and *Lucius* of *Cyrene*, and *Manaen*, which had been brought up with *Herod* the *Tetrarch*, and *Saul*. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me *Barnabas* and *Saul* for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” “This,” you say, “is the most ample account of an ordination to be found in scripture; and it is an account which, were there no other, would be sufficient to decide the present controversy in our favour.” Here, Sir, you speak with as much decision, as if the matter were perfectly clear and indisputable. But I am not at all surprised. I have lived long enough in this world to know, that bold and positive assertions are not without their effect upon the generality of readers. Few rigidly examine the truth of an assertion; especially, when it suits their preconceived opinion.

* Letter ii. p. 48.

You tell us, Sir, “ that if this be not an ordination, it will be difficult to say what constitutes one. Here were fasting, prayer, the imposition of hands, and every circumstance attending a formal investiture with the ministerial office.” But you do not consider, that it was “ *while* they were ministering to the Lord and fasting,” that, “ the Holy Ghost said, Separate me *Barnabas* and *Saul*,” &c. They did not meet for the purpose of *separating Barnabas* and *Saul*; but while they were performing some religious acts, accompanied with fasting and prayer, they received the divine command. This circumstance completely destroys your proof from the *fasting* and *praying* mentioned in the text. And as to the imposition of hands, you certainly know, that it was frequently used on other occasions, both by Jews and Christians. *Jacob* put his hands on the heads of *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*. And our Saviour acted in like manner, when he blessed the little children which were brought unto him.

“ In the case under consideration,” says the ingenious *Layman*, “ *Paul* and *Barnabas* were plainly not invested with any office; for whatever office they held after the transaction, they had held before; but a benediction was bestowed on their labours, in the circuit to which they were directed to go by the Holy Spirit. The transaction invested them with no new authority. It made them nothing that they were not before; which circumstance is utterly inconsistent with the idea of ordination, that being

the mode of delegating power not previously possessed. This matter, however, is put out of all doubt by referring to other passages of scripture relating to the same event. In the very next chapter, *Paul and Barnabas* are represented as having *fulfilled the particular mission* to which they had been designated by the transaction at *Antioch*, and as returning to give an account of the same—*And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.* Now, take these two parts of scripture, which is the best way of proceeding in all doubtful cases, and compare them together, and all doubt about the nature of this transaction will immediately vanish. Can any thing more clearly show that it was not the *Apostolic office*, but a *temporary mission* to which they had been set apart? The latter they might well represent themselves as having fulfilled; but surely not the former, it being an office that continued through life. We are here also let into the true meaning of the laying on of hands in this particular case. It was a solemn recommendation *to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.* When all the circumstances of the transaction, as recorded in the 13th and 14th chapters of the Acts, are fairly considered, there can be no sort of colour for representing *Paul and Barnabas* as ordained to any office, much less to the *Apostolic office.*"*

* *Miscellanies*, No. vi. p. 69, 70.

Further : *St. Paul* tells us that he was an *Apostle*, not of men, neither by man, but by *Jesus Christ* and *God the Father*. Now, what could render it necessary, or expedient, that *St. Paul* should be set apart to the Apostolical office, after he had been in the exercise of that office for nine years, according to *Dr. Whitby*?* You say, “it seemed good to the Holy Ghost that before they [*Paul* and *Barnabas*] entered on their grand-mission to the Gentiles, they should receive that kind of ordination, which was intended to be perpetual in the church.” But do you not perceive, Sir, that this is taking for granted the very point in dispute? We say, no—they were not *ordained*, but *recommended to the grace of God* for a particular work, which they fulfilled, and, of which, they made a faithful report, when they returned to *Antioch*. All the circumstances of the transaction evince this to be the case.

Still further : What more need could there have been for human hands to be laid on the heads of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, than upon the other Apostles, when they went forth to the *heathen* world? Not one of them underwent that ceremony. Even *Matthias*, who was chosen by lot, had not the hands of the other Apostles laid upon his head. All the text says, is, that “*he was numbered with the eleven Apostles*—not a syllable about ordination *by man*. Besides, the sacred text never uses the word *or-*

* Annot. Ep. Galat. i. 5.

dain. Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them—not ordain me Barnabas and Saul for the Apostolical office. Is it possible that any thing can be more clear?

Once more : Admitting, contrary to every consideration that can influence the mind in its decision, that this was an ordination; still it was an *extraordinary* case. It was done by the special command of the *Holy Ghost*—*The Holy Ghost said.* This would have made a valid ordination, had the ordainers been mere laymen.

You conclude your observations on this transaction in the following manner. “ But, after all, it does not destroy the argument, even if we concede that the case before us was not a regular ordination.” If it was not a regular ordination, it must certainly have been an irregular one, if it was any ordination at all. But an irregular ordination can be no example for regular ordinations. This, I believe, is acknowledged by all sober minded Christians ; and none but fanatics quote extraordinary cases to justify irregularity. You go on : “ It was certainly a solemn *separation to the work to which the Holy Ghost had called them.* This is the language of the inspired writer, and cannot be controverted. Now, it is a principle which pervades the scriptures, that an inferior is never called formally to pronounce benediction on an official superior. It is evident, therefore, that those who were competent to set apart ecclesiastical officers to a *particular ministry*, were

competent to set them apart to the *ministry in general*. So far, then, as the office sustained by *Paul* and *Barnabas* was ordinary and permanent in its nature, the Presbyters in *Antioch* were their equals." Now, Sir, if there be any force in this reasoning, it may be as well applied to your hypothesis, as to ours. For if it be necessary to a formal benediction, that it should be pronounced by a *superior* upon an *inferior*, then it follows, that the *prophets* and *teachers* at *Antioch*, who, by your own acknowledgment, were not superior to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, could not have ordained them; for benediction always accompanies ordination. So that, according to your mode of reasoning, those Apostles could neither have been ordained nor blessed. And then the whole transaction was a mere farce. This is too shocking.

When you infer "that those who were competent to set apart ecclesiastical officers to a *particular ministry*, were competent to set them apart to the *ministry in general*," you involve yourself in ambiguous terms. If you mean that those who can ordain to a *particular ministry*, can also ordain to a *general ministry*, you are undoubtedly right; but if you mean that those who can by prayer *recommend to the grace of God*, can therefore ordain to the ministry, you are undoubtedly wrong. Mere laymen might do the former, but mere laymen cannot do the latter. There is, therefore, no connection

between them ; and, consequently, your inference is not a logical result from the premise.

The truth is, the transaction before us, view it in whatever point of light you please, can never fairly be made an ordination. But if it could, it would be of no manner of service to you ; for the command of the *Holy Ghost* conveyed competent authority, and supplied every defect.

“ It was a maxim among the Jews,” says Archbishop *Potter*, “ that a *prophet may do all things.*” The meaning whereof was, that *prophets* having a particular warrant from God, might do things prohibited by the *Mosaical* law, which would be criminal for other men to attempt. It was death for any one of the other tribes to assume the office of a *Levite* ; or for a common *Levite* to offer sacrifice, which was appropriated to *Aaron* and his sons ; or for any of these to sacrifice in any other place beside the *tabernacle*. And yet *Elijah*, who was a *Tishbite of the inhabitants of Gilead*, and does not appear to have had the least relation to *Aaron’s* family, sacrificed a bullock upon *Mount Carmel*, whereof God declared his acceptance by consuming it by fire from heaven. And we find that *Samuel* anointed *David*, and another *prophet* anointed *Jehu*, to be kings of *Israel*, whilst others were in possession of the throne ; which acts, if they had been performed without God’s express *commission*, would not only have been invalid and null, but treasonable ; whereas

both of them had their full force and effect, as appears from the sequel of that history. And if the command of God authorized *prophets* to break God's own positive precepts, and to *constitute* kings, we cannot doubt but the same command might enable them to *ordain Apostles*. But then, should another, to whom God has given no such commandment, take upon him, by this example, to *ordain Apostles*, and other ecclesiastical *ministers*, he would be guilty of the same offence against the church, which private men who set up kings and magistrates, commit against the state."*

View then this transaction in any point of light you please ; take it either as an *ordination*, or as a *benediction*, it affords not the least countenance to your hypothesis.

But you seem to think, Sir, that you derive some support from *Taylor*, *Hammond*, *Lightfoot* and *Chrysostom*. It is true, that these writers consider this transaction as an ordination ; but then, you should have been so candid as to tell your readers what they thought of the ordainers. *Chrysostom* says,† that " Paul was separated to the office of an Apostle by the Lord ;" and that although " *Manahen*, *Lucius*, and *Simeon* did lay hands upon him," yet that he was " rather ordained by the *Holy Ghost*." He evidently makes the whole a miraculous busi-

* Church Government, p. 269, 270.

† Hom. 27 in Acts.

ness ; as you will see by consulting him on the place.

Hammond also considers the matter as an ordination ; but then he supposed the ordainers were Bishops. This favoured his hypothesis, which you know was a singular one, and in which he has been followed by scarcely any Episcopalian. *Whitby* condemns *Hammond's* notion of this transaction. "He could not," says *Whitby* upon the place, "have had any temptation to have made the other three, there named, Bishops, but that he finds them laying on of hands ; imagining that was for ordination, whereas, it was by way of benediction on their enterprize only, or *to recommend them to the grace of God.*"

You have also, Sir, given a very partial view of *Lightfoot's* opinion upon this point. He makes the *prophets* and *teachers* men endowed with the *Holy Ghost*, because "the church of *Antioch* was not yet arrived at that maturity that it should produce *teachers* that were not endowed with the *Holy Ghost*, and the gift of prophecy."* Men thus endowed, guided and directed by special revelation, were certainly competent to commission any officers whatever in the Christian church ; but to build upon this extraordinary case, even if it were an ordination, the right of Presbyters to commission men to minis-

* Vol. ii. p. 684.

ter in holy things, is taking such a liberty as ought not to be taken upon any principle of scripture, any usage of the church, or any dictate of reason.

Bishop *Taylor* is another writer whom you quote, as favouring your opinion concerning the transaction at *Antioch*. But you should have observed, that *Taylor* considers the ordainers as more than Presbyters. He appears to have been of *Lightfoot's* opinion, that the ordainers were all *Prophets*, or prophetical teachers, and that it was in effect an ordination by the Holy Ghost.

I shall now conclude with the words of the learned and pious Dr. *Doddridge*. “That they [*Paul* and *Barnabas*] were now vested with the *Apostolic office* by these inferior ministers, is a thing neither credible in itself, nor consistent with what *Paul* himself says, *Gal. i. 1.*—*Paul, an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.* And that they now received a power before unknown in the church, is inconsistent with *Acts xi. 20, 21*, and upon many other considerations, appears to me absolutely incredible.” And, upon the words—*By the Holy Ghost*, he says, “This seems to be added to remind us, that though they were solemnly recommended by the *prayers of their brethren*, their authority was not derived *from them*, but from the *Holy Spirit* himself.

When, Sir, you make this transaction an ordination, you appear to me to forget one of the proofs

which the advocates of parity give for the propriety of the opinion, that the Apostolic office was not transmissible, because it was immediately given by *Jesus Christ* himself. If this be correct, the imposition of hands at *Antioch* could not have been for the purpose of conveying Apostolic authority; and if not for this purpose, it could not be for any thing but to commend *Paul* and *Barnabas* to the *grace of God*. This is *argumentum ad hominem*, and it concerns you to answer it.

Perhaps you will say as some have, when pressed with these difficulties, that it was an ordination to a special ministry among the *Gentiles*. But that could not have been the case, for two very good reasons—the one is, that the commission given to the Apostles authorized them to preach the gospel to all nations; consequently, *St. Paul* had full authority to preach to the *Gentiles*, without a particular ordination by human hands. And, secondly, that in fact *St. Paul* did not wait for any such ordination before he preached to the *Gentiles*, for he himself informs us, that *immediately he consulted not with flesh and blood*, nor repaired to the Apostles at *Jerusalem*; but went from *Damascus* the contrary way into *Arabia*, where he remained three years preaching to the heathen. There is then no point of light in which this transaction can be viewed, that affords any ground for supposing it to have been an ordination. It could, therefore, have been nothing but a solemn benediction.

I have dwelt the longer upon this point, because you seem to lay great stress upon it, and because you advance your opinion with the utmost degree of confidence.

The next instance of ordination by Presbyters is that of *Timothy*. But as this will require a good deal of discussion, I shall postpone it to the instance you quote of *Paul* and *Barnabas* proceeding through the cities of *Lystra*, *Iconium*, &c. and ordaining *Elders in every church*. Your quoting this as a proof of Presbyterian ordination, astonishes me. In the preceding article, you endeavoured to prove that *St. Paul* was ordained at *Antioch*. To what was he ordained? If to any thing, it was to the Apostolic office. Now, to whatever *St. Paul* was ordained, *Barnabas* also was ordained; for, certainly, there is not the least shadow of distinction made between them. *St. Paul* also speaks of *Barnabas* as a person in the same station with himself. *Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas? And I only and Barnabas, have we not power to forbear working?* These words suppose *Barnabas* to have been *St. Paul's* colleague, and *St. Paul* to have had equal power with the most eminent Apostles; and both to have been clothed with the authority of the Apostleship; otherwise *St. Paul's* expostulation would have been nothing to the purpose.

Again: The scriptures, speaking of *Paul* and

Barnabas, while they were together, ever styles them Apostles; and no kind of distinction whatever is made between them. Thus, *Acts* xiv. 4. *But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the Apostles, [Paul and Barnabas.]* And again: *Which when the Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, &c.*

So evident is it, that *Barnabas* was an Apostle in the same sense in which *St. Paul* was, that even *Salmasius*, a great opponent of Episcopacy, could not resist the evidence. He approves of the passage quoted from the reputed *Ambrose* by *Amalarius*, in which it is asserted, that they who were ordained to govern the churches after the Apostles, finding themselves not equal to their predecessors in miracles, or other qualifications, would not challenge to themselves the name of Apostles; but the titles of Bishops and Presbyters they thus divided. That of Presbyters they left to others, and that of Bishops was appropriated to them who had the power of ordination; so that they presided over churches in the fullest right.*

How consistent this is with *Salmasius*' opposition to Episcopacy, the reader will readily perceive. But the truth was too powerful for him—he could not resist it.

* See Burscough on Church Government, under the title, "The office of Apostles was communicated to many besides the twelve."

“ This is not the only instance in which *Salmasius* has done justice to the truth, although to the utter ruin of his own cause. For, in his dissertation against *Petavius*,* he proves that there were many secondary Apostles, as we call them for distinction sake, who were the disciples of the first. And these, he tells us, governed the churches with equal right and power, and in the same manner as the first had done. He also ascribes to them the same place over Presbyters, that Bishops had in succeeding times. So that, according to him, there were always prelates since the days of Christ, differing indeed in name and circumstances, in the first ages, but not in authority.” Such is the testimony of an adversary.

If you consult writers of the greatest note amongst the advocates of Presbyterian parity, you will find them conceding that *Epaphroditus*, whom *St. Paul* calls an Apostle, was more than a *Messenger*. *Blondel*† reckons him amongst the chief governors of churches ; and for this he quotes *Pacianus*, *Jerome*, and *Theodoret* ; and he might have added *Hilary*. *Walo Messalinus* approves of this ; for, he says, “ *Epaphroditus* was called the Apostle of the *Philippians*, as *St. Paul* was of the *Gentiles*, and *Peter* the Apostle of the *circumcision*.” He mentions the contrary opinion, but then adds, “ To me it seems to have no appearance of truth, since

* *Walo Messal.* c. i.

† *Blondel's Apology*, sect. ii. p. 85.

I know that the word Apostle is never used by *St. Paul*, nor by other Apostles and Evangelists, but for a sacred ministry.”*

It has always, Sir, appeared to me an unwarrantable liberty in our opponents, to assert directly in the face of scripture evidence, that the Apostolic office was not designed for perpetuity. In what did that office consist? It consisted in preaching the gospel, administering the sacraments, ordaining ministers, and exercising supreme authority in the church. This was the whole of their commission, as we have it in scripture; although, no doubt, afterwards, they had much instruction given them upon that head. One part of this commission we find in *John* xx. 21, 22, 23, and the other in *Matt.* xxviii. 19, 20, and in *Mark* xvi. 15. This sacerdotal commission was to be conveyed by the Apostles to others, and so on *to the end of the world*; for Christ had assured his Apostles, that he would be with them, that is, with the authority he had just given them, *to the end of the world*. This secures the Apostolic office in the church as long as there shall be a church upon earth. One would suppose, that there could be no dispute among Christians upon this point. But here lies the fallacy. The miraculous powers of the Apostles are confounded with their authority, when they are as different things as the qualifications for an office, and the office itself.

* Wal. Mess. c. i. 57—60, as quoted by *Burroughs*.

The propagation of the gospel, at first, required that its ministers should be endowed with extraordinary gifts ; otherwise, the powers of the world would, in all probability, have been too mighty for them. These extraordinary powers were then the means, vouchsafed to the Apostles, to ensure success to their ministry ; but they made no part of the commission with which the Apostles were entrusted. Their commission was complete the moment it was given to them, but their extraordinary qualifications were not vouchsafed till some time after ; and if those qualifications had never been given, they would have been as much Christ's Apostles as with them. They would indeed have had much greater difficulties to contend with ; but this has no kind of connection with the idea of a commission ; no more than the qualifications you possess for the office you bear, enter into the idea of the authority implied in that office. What can be more evident than this ? Besides, miraculous powers were not peculiar to the Apostles. Inferior ministers, and even laymen possessed them. It was an age of wonders.—“ But the Apostles spoke with tongues.” So did many others, as appears from the epistles to the *Corinthians*. “ They delivered to men the mind of Christ, and were, in so doing, infallible.” So did *St. Luke*, who, so far as we know, was nothing but a layman : So did *St. Mark*, who was the first Bishop of *Alexandria*, but not one of the twelve. “ The Apostles saw Christ in the flesh.” So did others ;

about *five hundred brethren at once*. “The Apostles were not confined to a particular district, as *diocesan* Bishops are.” This is not true ; as appears from the case of *St. James*, if he was one of the twelve. But supposing it to be so, it is nothing to the purpose ; for a Bishop at large is as much a Bishop as one confined to a diocese. Would you be less a Presbyter than you are, were you to be employed all your life in preaching the gospel to the numerous tribes of *Indians* on this continent? It is astonishing, that men of sense can descend so low, as to make such ridiculous objections to the transmission of the Apostolic office. The *office* is essential to the existence of the church of Christ; but the *extraordinary qualifications* to render that office effectual to the conversion of the world, have long since ceased. The continuance of the former was therefore promised by Christ himself, whose word cannot fail ; but the continuance of the latter was not promised, because infinite wisdom did not think it necessary. This is the broad line of distinction established by the scriptures, and by the very nature of the case.

Upon this head there seems to be something like an accommodation between us. In your third *letter** you divide the ministry of the Apostles into *extraordinary* and *ordinary*. The latter you say was transmitted ; but the former ceased with the lives of

the Apostles. Just so we say ; but here lies the fallacy. You apply the word *ministry* both to the qualifications, and to the commission ; by which you mean to convey to your readers the idea of an extraordinary and ordinary commission ; and as the extraordinary ceased with the lives of the Apostles, then it will follow that there could be no succession but to the ordinary part of the Apostolic commission, and consequently, *Barnabas*, *Epaphroditus*, and others, could not have been invested with ministerial, or sacerdotal powers equal to those of *St. Paul*. But the reasoning which I have offered does, to my mind, completely prove all this to be mere sophistry. For it was the *commission* that gave the Apostles their *primacy* in the church, and not their *qualifications*. It was the *commission* which made them superior to Presbyters, Deacons, and laymen, and not their inspiration and power of working miracles, and speaking with tongues ; for the very laity possessed these powers. *Barnabas*, then, if he were even destitute of some, or of all these extraordinary powers, by being invested with the same commission that *St. Paul* was, became thereby an Apostle, in the proper sense of the word ; and not as you say, “ in a vague and general sense—as a messenger, chosen either by the twelve or by the churches themselves, to go to distant places, on special sources.” Let any one read the history of *Paul* and *Barnabas*’ travels, and then point out in what respect the latter was inferior to the former, as a minis-

ter of Christ. *Barnabas* is always styled an Apostle. *St. Paul* always speaks of him as his colleague, as entitled to the same privileges with himself. He appears to have exercised precisely the same ministerial authority that *Paul* did. And in the contention which took place between them about *Mark*, *Paul* exercised no authority over *Barnabas*; they debated the matter upon equal terms, and parted from each other without any mark of superiority in *Paul*, or of inferiority in *Barnabas*.

From these reasonings and scripture proofs, I think we may fairly conclude, with all antiquity, that *Barnabas* held the rank of an Apostle in the Christian church, and, consequently, that the ordinations which *Paul* and he performed, were Episcopal, and not Presbyterian.

Keeping these things in mind, and adverting to the proofs which I have given, that the transaction at *Antioch* was not an ordination, our readers will be able to appreciate the correctness of your concluding sentences.—“ The supposition that he [*Barnabas*] bore an ecclesiastical rank above that of Presbyter, is effectually refuted by the fact that he was himself ordained by the Presbyters of *Antioch*. As a Presbyter, therefore, he ordained others, and the only rational construction that can be given to the passage renders it a plain precedent for Presbyterian ordination.”

In your third *letter*, p. 93, you say, “ the whole argument for the superiority of Bishops, drawn

from their being considered as the proper, and exclusive successors of the Apostles in their official pre-eminence, has been pronounced invalid, and wholly abandoned by some of the most distinguished writers of the church of *England*. In this list are found the names of Dr. *Barrow*, Mr. *Dodwell*, Bishop *Hoadly*, and others of equal eminence." I shall begin my next *letter* with the consideration of this assertion.

LETTER XI.

REV. SIR,

I AM now to consider your assertion, that Dr. *Barrow*, Mr. *Dodwell*, and Bishop *Hoadly* have given up the argument drawn from the succession of Bishops to the Apostolical pre-eminence ; or, in other words, that they deny that the Apostolical commission was conveyed to others.

Now, Sir, from the very nature of the case, I cannot suppose this assertion is correct. For as in the first age there were in the church Apostles, Presbyters, or *Overseers*, and Deacons, there could not have been in the next age, Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, unless the Bishops succeeded to the Apostolic pre-eminence, either in whole or in part. For an Episcopalian, therefore, to give up this point, is to give up the cause, or, at least, to be very inconsistent.

First, for Dr. *Barrow*. Here, Sir, as usual, you give us no reference. It is enough, it seems, for you to assert ; we must implicitly receive your assertions. I am as willing to be patient as any man ; but there is a point beyond which patience will not hold out. I will, however, do my best to bear with

this unscholar-like management, and will turn over *folio* pages with all the calmness I am master of, to ascertain the correctness of your assertions. I have done this in respect of *Barrow*, and the result is in no degree in your favour.

This author, if I understand him, maintains the succession of Bishops to the pre-eminence of the Apostles, in what was permanent in their office, as much as any Episcopalian. In his *Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy*, he quotes several assertions of the Fathers to that purpose, of which he approves. Thus, page 609: "They deem all Bishops to partake of the Apostolical authority, according to that of *St. Basil* to *St. Ambrose*;—*the Lord himself hath translated thee from the judges of the earth to the Prelacy of the Apostles.*" Again: "They took themselves all to be Vicars of Christ, and judges in his stead." And again: "The Bishops of any other churches founded by the Apostles, in the Fathers' style, are successors of the Apostles, in the same sense, and to the same intent, as the Bishop of Rome is by them considered the successor to *St. Peter*,"* &c. Once more: "The Bishops of *Jerusalem*, successors of *St. James*, did not thence claim, I know not what kind of extensive jurisdiction, yea, notwithstanding their succession," &c. A number of other passages might be adduced, asserting the succession of the Bishops to

* Page 610.

the Apostles, in that sense in which alone it can be asserted, viz. their succession to that superiority over all orders in the church, which the Apostles possessed. To their singular gifts indeed, Dr. *Barrow* maintains, as every other Episcopalian does, there was no succession. Their inspiration, their power of working miracles, their speaking a variety of tongues, were not, to be sure, communicated with their commission. But these are ever to be carefully distinguished; and then there will not be the least foundation for asserting that the commission of the Apostles ceased with their lives. There is the same necessity now that there ever was, for every particular implied in the Apostolic commission. The church of Christ cannot exist without it; accordingly, you ascribe to your Presbytery the whole authority implied in the Apostolic commission. We ascribe but a *part* of it to the Presbyters, and the *whole* of it to the Bishops. This is the *jugulum causæ*; and when this shall be once settled, the dispute must come to an end.

It is one of the extraordinary circumstances that has always occurred in the discussion of this subject, that our opponents at one time assert, that the Apostolical commission was to be continued in the church, and that, accordingly, it was actually conveyed to the Presbyters; but when we say, no, it was not communicated to the Presbyters *in toto*, but to the Bishops; then they tell us, that the Apostolical commission was to cease with the lives of the Apostles,

and flourish away about their *extraordinary* powers, as if these made any part of their commission; making no distinction at all between the wonderful qualifications of the Apostles for executing their commission, and the commission itself. By this artful management, a mist is spread around a subject, that is in itself perfectly clear. In civil affairs, this confusion never takes place. No one ever confounded great qualifications for a civil office, with the office itself. Is not this perfectly obvious? Is there any room for mistake upon this point? Do we ever mistake in regard to civil affairs?—Never.

Conformably to this unfair procedure, our opponents, whenever they meet with an Episcopal writer, who denies a succession to the extraordinary qualifications of the Apostles, never fail to tell us that some of our own writers give up the pretence of Bishops succeeding to the Apostolic commission, and their *Christian brethren* have no difficulty whatever in believing it. But if you ask those persons to what their Presbyters succeed, they tell you at once, that they succeed to all that is contained in the commission given by Christ to his Apostles. And thus, what they deny to our Bishops, they ascribe to their own Presbyters. This, Sir, appears to me to be precisely your mode of reasoning. *Barrow* and others deny a succession to what was extraordinary in the Apostolical character; and, therefore, you infer, that they deny a succession to the Apostolic commission. This is a *non sequitur*;

there is not the least connection between the two propositions.—*Barrow*, we have now seen, does not answer your purpose at all. Let us next see, how it is with *Dodwell* and *Hoadly*.

In looking over *Dodwell's Discourse concerning the one Priesthood, and one Altar*, I find the following passages directly in point against you. Speaking, page 244, of the mode of reasoning of the primitive Fathers against the *heretics* of their day, he observes, that “they insist on no testimony of any church as competent for this purpose, but of those alone, which had at first received their traditions immediately from the Apostles themselves in person, and insist on no *succession* of Bishops as competent for deducing such a testimony to their own times, but only such *successions*, whereof the first were contemporary with the Apostles themselves, that such Bishops might receive their traditions immediately from the Apostles, as well as their churches.”

My second quotation is from the same book, page 389. Speaking of God's instituted covenanting symbols, by which he bound himself to ratify what is represented in his name, he asks, “What can be requisite for deriving this appointment at a distance, but an *uninterrupted succession* from them who had it *immediately*? What more had those earlier ages themselves for it? What more can our adversaries themselves pretend; at least, what more can they rationally account for, without enthusiastic

pretences to new revelations? And do not our Bishops plead the same argument of *succession*? Nor is it any matter in *law* for weakening the claim, at what distance this *succession* be deduced, so that it be still deduced through unquestionable hands. No matter how long the *chain* be, so the *links* be entire and equal to the burden supported by it."

Another passage to my purpose I find in *Dodwell's second Letter to Baxter*, p. 219. He observes of the Bishops of the third century, that they "are such as are called *successors of the Apostles*. And that by these *successors of the Apostles*, single persons are understood in the language of that age, appears in that when they prove *succession* from the Apostles, they do it by *catalogues of single persons*, as those in *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, &c. and that Bishops in the confined sense are so frequently said to be *successors of the Apostles*, which is not said of *simple Presbyters*. See *St. Cyprian*, Ep. 42, 65, 69."

Nor will you, Sir, fare one tittle better with respect to *Hoadly*. I did but just open his book on *The Reasonableness of Conformity*, when I found, page 4th, the following striking passage. "We think we can demonstrate that in the primitive times, the administration of ecclesiastical affairs was in the hands of the Bishops, who had Presbyters subject to them. That as the Apostles maintained a superiority over the Presbyters of the churches they constituted, so upon occasion of their

absence, they settled others in this superiority. That as these thus *succeeding the Apostles* had the power of ordination committed to them, so their *successors* in the following ages claimed this power as their right, and looked upon ordination to be their *office* in the regular course of things. No wonder, then, that we require all that come into the ministry, to come in at this door, which we think opened for that purpose by the Apostles."

It is, however, notwithstanding this, but fair to acknowledge, that although *Hoadly* maintains the *actual succession* of Bishops to the Apostolical pre-eminence; yet he thinks, that *necessity* would justify a departure from the line of succession. While this was his *opinion*, the *fact* that there *was* a succession, he asserts in the above quotation, as well as in other parts of his book.

Had you, Sir, been so candid as to notice this distinction, your readers would have seen at once that *Hoadly* can be of no manner of service to you. As the scriptures say nothing about a *case of necessity*, men must be left to their own reasoning upon that point; and when left to such a fallible guide, there will, of course, be a difference of opinion. Accordingly, there is no difficulty in quoting Episcopalians, who, while they assert the Apostolic institution of Episcopacy, and its unbroken succession from its rise to the present day, yet think, where Bishops cannot be had, it would be justifiable for Presbyters to ordain, rather than that the church

of Christ should become extinct in that particular country. With such men we have no dispute; but deem them good Episcopalians, and would freely admit them to holy orders. Some there are indeed, who do not admit this distinction. They say, the scriptures do not contemplate a case of necessity, and, therefore, no one has a right to decide in favour of it. And in point of *fact*, they say no such case has ever occurred; and, therefore, we have no right to suppose it ever *will*; but if it *should*, it will then be time enough to discuss the point. This admission of a case of necessity, is the amount of the concessions made by those Episcopalians whom you have quoted in your 6th and 7th *Letters*, as will be made to appear, when I shall consider that part of your book.

Your next proof for the right of Presbyters to ordain, is taken from *St. Paul's* first Epistle to *Timothy*, chap. iv. 14. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.* Upon this text you observe, "All agree that the Apostle is here speaking of *Timothy's* ordination; and this ordination is expressly said to have been performed with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery—that is, of the *Eldership*, or a council of *Presbyters*."

Now, Sir, I deny that all agree that this text relates to *ordination*. *Headly*, for one, is of a different opinion. Speaking of the text, 2 Tim. i. 6. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir*

up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands, he observes, "If the gift in the latter place may signify the *Holy Ghost*, why not in the former? [in the former text]. As, indeed, any one would judge that this word rather imports the *extraordinary qualifications* given to *Timothy* from above, for the better execution of his *office*, than the *office* itself, to which it does not seem probable to me, that he was appointed by any besides *St. Paul* himself. So that my first answer is, that the ordination of *Timothy*, or the appointment of him to his peculiar office, is not the thing here spoken of; and, consequently, nothing can be collected from hence in favour of *Presbyterian ordination*."

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, if it signify the *office* to which *Timothy* was appointed, appears to me a very singular kind of expression, and very difficult to be reconciled with propriety. *Neglect not the gift*, when it signifies the office, may indeed be considered as an elliptical form of expression, signifying the duties of the office; but the expression, *the office that is in thee*, I cannot reconcile with propriety. The office with which a man is invested—which is conferred upon him, I can readily understand; but not the office that is *in* a man. The same objection may be made to the expression—*Stir up the gift that is in thee*, when that gift is applied to an office. It is, therefore, altogether gratuitous to interpret the *latter* text as importing

the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the *former* as relating to ordination. You may take your choice ;— either consider both as referring to ordination, or reject both in that view of them. But I will admit no *assumption* in this, or any other part of the discussion.

Notwithstanding this difficulty in the way of the opinion, that these texts refer to ordination, yet as the generality of commentators think they do, I am willing to admit it, and to meet every thing that can be said by the advocates of *Presbytery* upon the subject.

First, then ; the highest church officers, the Apostles themselves, are frequently called in *holy scripture*, *Presbyters* or *Elders*, and, therefore, a company of these *may* be called a *Presbytery*. For, if, according to your hypothesis, a number of mere Presbyters may be called a Presbytery, what reason can be assigned why a number of Apostolical Presbyters may not be so called? If you could produce one or two texts of scripture, to prove that a Presbytery means a company of Presbyters exclusively, you would then do something to the purpose. But, Sir, you must very well know that there is not another passage of scripture, in which the word is used in reference to an ecclesiastical assembly. How then are we to decide the point? Apostles both *were*, and were *called* Elders. Then, surely, a company of them *may* be called a Presbytery ; and if so, then *Timothy* may have been ordained

by a company of Apostles, of which *St. Paul* was the officiating minister. Nor would it indicate any want of modesty, as you intimate, that *St. Paul* ascribes the ordination to the imposition of his own hands. *Timothy* was his own *son in the faith*. It would, therefore, be almost a matter of course, that he should preside on such an occasion; and being the presiding officer, with propriety he might speak of himself as the chief agent in the business. Indeed, to me it appears, that the person who uses the words, by which the commission is conveyed, is the sole ordainer, and that the others who *lay on hands*, let them be even Apostles, or Bishops, do no more than express approbation. For the officer who uses the words conveying the commission, either has the power singly to invest the ordained with valid authority, or he has not. If he has not, then the others who concur with him have not; for fifty cyphers will not make a unit. If he *has*, then the hands of the others are totally unnecessary, merely, as to the conveyance of the commission; although not so as to the solemnity and dignity of the transaction, and for the purpose of expressing approbation. Accordingly, it is a matter that is not disputed among Presbyterians, whether a single Presbyter would not convey as valid authority as a hundred united; nor among Episcopalians, whether the consecration of a Bishop, by a single Bishop, would not be as valid as by a plurality. The consecration, indeed, would not be *canonical*; but that

is a very different consideration. The *canons* of the church rest upon ecclesiastical authority; but the validity of the commission upon the competency of the ordainer, and ultimately upon divine authority. A number of ordainers is, therefore, unnecessary, and there is nothing added thereby to the validity of the commission conveyed by the presiding officer. *St. Paul*, then, was not guilty of a violation of modesty, when he ascribed to himself *Timothy's* ordination. He was the ordainer, and the others, whether Apostles, or Presbyters, expressed nothing more than approbation, or concurrence. If this distinction be correct, it is needless to dispute about the meaning of the word *Presbytery*.

My first answer, then, is, that it can never be proved by scripture, nor by any mode of reasoning whatever, that the word *Presbytery*, in the text in question, means a company of mere Presbyters.

As a farther proof of the correctness of this distinction, let it be kept in mind, that it has been proved from the holy scripture, that *Timothy* was sent to *Ephesus* to ordain Presbyters, to govern those Presbyters, and also the Deacons and the laity; to inflict censure upon both clergy and people; in short, to superintend and direct all the affairs of that church. I believe there never was a Presbyterian writer who denied this. Indeed, there is no room for any difference of opinion upon the subject; but as this would put an end to the dispute, it

must be evaded some how or other. Accordingly, it is said that *Timothy's* superiority at *Ephesus* was founded upon his character as an Evangelist; and as the office of an Evangelist was extraordinary, it ended with the Apostolic age. But it has been shown, that this is bold, gratuitous assertion—a mere shift to get rid of an uncontrollable fact. It has been shown, that from the very nature of the office, it must continue as long as there are any nations to be converted to the faith of Christ; that at any rate, *Timothy* could not be an Evangelist to the Christians at *Ephesus*, when *St. Paul* sent him to govern that church; and that (which is perfectly decisive) he had successors in the very same authority which he exercised. This, then, being the case, it proves almost to a demonstration, that Presbyters were not invested with the power of ordaining; and, consequently, that the Presbytery which laid hands on *Timothy* was composed, either altogether of Apostles, or (to make the utmost concession) Presbyters with an Apostle at their head. Now, these Presbyters either *did*, or *did not* ordain. If they *did*, then they conveyed, as clearly appears from the epistles to *Timothy*, what they did not possess, which is palpable absurdity. If they *did not* ordain, then they expressed nothing but *approbation*; and this proves the distinction between $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha$ and $\delta\iota\alpha$ to be just and proper. So that if I even concede, for the sake of argument, that the Presbytery was composed of *St. Paul* and a num-

ber of mere Presbyters, you are as far from your object as ever. *St. Paul* was the ordainer, and the Presbyters expressed only concurrence.

As a further proof of the presumptive kind, that the Presbytery was composed, either of a few of the primary Apostles, or, which is equally probable, of *St. Paul*, and a few secondary Apostles, as some of the ancients called them, or Apostles of men, as the scriptures style them, we have the opinion of some of the most learned of the Fathers. *Chrysostom*, in his commentary upon the place, says, that the Presbytery was composed of *St. Paul* and some other Apostles. *Theophylact* and *Oecumenius* understand the matter as *Chrysostom* did, and the reason they assign is, that Presbyters cannot ordain a Bishop. *Ignatius* too, in his Epistle to the *Philadelphians*, calls the Apostles alone, the Presbytery of the church, although he generally gives the name to the Presbyters as the Bishop's council. The author of the *Ethiopic* version, says *Potter*,* understood the matter thus; as the hands of the Presbytery are translated the hands of the Bishops. "There has not," continues he, "been produced so much as one example in the first three centuries of any mere Presbyters imposing hands on Bishops, and much less without them, in any ordination whatever. In the latter end of the fourth century, the fourth council of *Carthage* de-

* Church Government, p. 272.

creed, that, in the ordination of Presbyters, all the Presbyters present should lay on their hands near the Bishop's hands.* The design of which canon seems to have been, that the ordination of Presbyters should be performed with solemnity and deliberation, and to prevent Bishops from admitting into this order any whom their clergy did not approve ; but there is not the least intimation, that the validity of orders was thought to depend on the Presbyters imposing their hands. In the same council it was ordered, that the Bishop only should lay on his hand in the ordination of Deacons. In the ordination of Bishops, there is never any mention of Presbyters imposing their hands, either before the making of the forementioned canon, or afterwards. However, the custom of allowing Presbyters to lay on their hands with the Bishop in the ordination of Presbyters, was introduced by degrees into most of the *Western* churches ; but in the *Oriental* churches, they have still kept up the more ancient practice of excluding the Presbyters from having any concernment in ordination."

It appears to me, Sir, to be incredible, that if Presbyters had a right to ordain, the whole church of Christ, in the purest and best ages, should have been totally ignorant of it. The text of scripture now in dispute, if *your* sense of it had prevailed among the primitive Christians, would necessarily

* Canon iii. Presbyter cum ordinatur, &c.

have been a warrant to them to admit the validity of Presbyterian ordination. They could not have mistaken the meaning of the text, because they had before their eyes traditional practice to illustrate it. The second century would have known the practice of the first; thousands having lived to the middle of that century, who were born in the first; and thousands lived in the third century, who were born in the second. So that the primitive Christians had the best possible commentary upon this text—even ocular demonstration. Had it been a text which involved no rite, no practice of the church, it would have been materially different; there would then have been room for mistake, as tradition will seldom convey the meaning of words with correctness. But a traditional fact is a very different thing. It is considered by all denominations of Christians, a strong argument against the enemies of revelation, that certain rites were instituted by *Moses* as monuments of particular deliverances vouchsafed by God to the Israelites. The same may be said with respect to the institutions under the gospel. “The histories of Exodus and the Gospel never could have been received, if they had not been true; because the institution of the Priesthood of Levi, and of Christ; of the Sabbath, of the Passover, of Circumcision, of Baptism, and of the Lord’s Supper, &c. are there related, as descending all the way down from those times, with-

out interruption.”* Just so it is with respect to ordination by Bishops. That rite, always performed by that order of ecclesiastics, was a proof of an original imparity. Consult the fourth century, and you find that rite administered by Bishops; and that it was not only the *practice* of the church in that age, but also the *avowed sentiment* that it had been so from the beginning of the Christian church. Consult the third century, and you find the same *rite* performed by the same persons, and the same testimony to its divine origin. Consult the second century, and you find the same *rite*, and the same testimony; and in a particular manner, you find a venerable Bishop, the pious and martyred *Ignatius*, who lived a great part of his life in the Apostolic age, and who was personally acquainted with some of the Apostles, declaring a little before his death to the Christians of his time, that all spiritual power in the church was derived from the Bishop, and, consequently, that none performed the rite of ordination but Bishops. Here, then, we have a *rite* performed by a certain order of ministers from its first institution, and handed down through every age of the church, without any dispute, till the sixteenth century. Can you find, Sir, a better commentary upon the text in question than this? Will you suffer an obscure word to influence your judgment, in opposition to this sure guide? Will not

* Scholar Armed, vol. i. p. 24.

the epistles to *Timothy*, in which it appears to be the fact, that he alone was the ordainer in the church of *Ephesus*, in connection with the practice and testimony of the second, third, fourth, and all succeeding centuries, be esteemed an infallible explanation of the word *Presbytery*. I am certain, that if we had light thrown in a similar manner upon many obscure passages of scripture; we should think the meaning very well ascertained; and if no particular hypothesis stood in the way, Christians of all denominations would meet one another in the same interpretation. Whence arises the opposition in this case? Why is not consistency preserved? Why is not the same degree of evidence considered as conclusive in the one case, as in the other? What can it be but the love of hypothesis, which fills men's heads with false views, and their reasonings with false consequences?

But it seems there is to be no end of misrepresentation, nor of attaching consequence to what has none. You assert, that if *Paul* was the sole ordainer, it will follow "that one Bishop is sufficient for the regular (you should have said *valid*) ordination of another Bishop, which is opposed to every principle of Episcopal government, as well as to the established canons, so far as I know, of every church on earth."

I really, Sir, wonder at this observation. You must certainly know, that Episcopalians consider

the consecration of a Bishop by a single Bishop perfectly valid, and that the custom of performing the rite by two, or three, is merely a matter of expediency. It would not, indeed, be agreeable to the canons of our church; but that affects not the validity of the ordination in the slightest degree. I am persuaded that this is the opinion of every Presbyterian upon earth, with respect to the validity of ordination by a single Bishop, or a single Presbyter. Had you used the word *valid* instead of the word *regular*, the incorrectness of the observation would be too palpable for the most cursory reader to overlook.

It is strange, Sir, to me, that you should be so totally forgetful of your own assertions, as you have been in this and other instances. You maintain that there were no Presbyters at *Crete*, when *St. Paul* sent *Titus* to govern that church; nor at *Ephesus*, when *Timothy* was sent thither for the same purpose. Pray, Sir, who were joined with them when they ordained the first Elders? You have not the shadow of proof that there were any. And yet, you seem to be desirous to impress upon the minds of your readers the notion, that a plurality of ordainers is necessary to a valid ordination. Strange inconsistency!

But there is no end to cavilling. You tell us, that the supposition of *St. Paul*, with a number of Presbyters laying their hands on *Timothy*, “will be

fatal to the Episcopal cause.* For let it be remembered, that all Episcopalians in this controversy, take for granted, that *Timothy* was, at this time, ordained a *diocesan* Bishop. But if this were so, how came Presbyters to lay their hands on him at his ordination? We know that Presbyters in the Episcopal church, are in the habit of laying on their hands with those of the Bishop in ordaining Presbyters; but was it ever heard of in the Christian church, after the distinction between Bishops and Presbyters arose, that those who admitted this distinction, suffered Presbyters to join with Bishops by imposing hands in the consecration of a Bishop? No; on Episcopal principles this would be an irregularity of the most absurd and inadmissible kind."

Now, Sir, before you came to this conclusion, you ought to have proved, 1st. That the two texts in question do certainly relate to ordination. 2d. If they do, that the Presbytery signifies a number of mere Presbyters, and not a number of Apostles, either primary or secondary. 3d. That if mere Presbyters, with an Apostle at their head, laid their hands on *Timothy*, that the authority which was conveyed to him, was not conveyed solely by the Apostle, who was confessedly the superior officer, but also by the Presbyters, over whom *Timothy* was to preside. 4th. If this latter be the case, then

you should have removed the absurdity which results from inferiors ordaining a superior. And, lastly, you should have shown, that this ordination of *Timothy* was to the office of a Bishop, and not of a Presbyter, and that the Presbyterate was the highest grade to which he ever attained. Unless you can make out all these particulars, you do nothing to the purpose : but I believe you will find it a very hard matter to prove these points. *Hic labor, hoc opus est.*

But let it be admitted, that *Timothy* was ordained a Bishop, and not a Presbyter, at this time ; yet, no absurdity results from mere Presbyters laying on their hands at the same time ; as Episcopalians maintain, that *St. Paul* was the ordainer, and that the Presbyters only added to the solemnity, and expressed their approbation of the transaction. That this is not the practice of the ordination of a Bishop now, is merely a circumstance of ecclesiastical regulation ; nor would the highest Episcopalian in the world conceive the consecration of a Bishop, in the smallest degree, marred by two or three Presbyters laying on their hands at the same time with a single Bishop ; as they would ascribe the conveyance of the Episcopal authority solely to the Bishop, who alone uses the words of conveyance, and whose hands alone would be sufficient without those of other Bishops.

There cannot, to my mind, be a stronger proof of the correctness of the opinion, that the Presby-

tery in one of these texts, supposing it to refer to ordination, was composed of *St. Paul* and two or three other Apostles, or at least *Apostolical men*, as the first Bishops were called, than the circumstance that Presbyters never were known to have laid on their hands at the consecration of a Bishop, and until the fourth century, not even at the ordination of a Presbyter. It is inconceivable how this could have been the case, if your interpretation of these texts be right. Certainly the ancients had better means of knowing how this matter stood, than any moderns can have ; and as they were remarkably tenacious of Apostolical institutions, it is inadmissible, that they laid aside the Apostolical practice, when there is not the least hint of the kind. To consider the word Presbytery alone a proof of the correctness of your opinion, is taking for granted the very point in dispute ; and I hope, as a scholar, you will not have recourse to such an expedient.

The result from what has been said upon the two texts in question, is, I think, fairly this :—We cannot prove that these passages have any relation at all to ordination ; or if it be conceded that they have, it cannot be determined from scripture, what the meaning of the word *Presbytery* is ; as it is never used in an ecclesiastical sense but in one of these texts. But if we will take antiquity for our guide, we shall find that several of the most distinguished Fathers are of opinion, that the word is

that place means a plurality of Apostles ; but what is of more weight, we have no example for near four hundred years of Presbyters joining with Bishops, in the ordination of Presbyters ; and none to the present day in ordaining a Bishop, which never could have been the case upon your hypothesis. But what is of still more weight, your sense of the word is utterly inconsistent with the *epistles to Timothy* ; from which it is as evident as the sun in the firmament, that Presbyters had not the power of ordination. These considerations are of such moment, that I think it may be said with truth,—the balance is greatly in favour of our side of the question.

But as there is no probability that we shall meet one another upon this point, the least I think you can do, as a reasonable and candid opponent, is to consider these texts as involved in some degree of obscurity ; and, therefore, upon every fair principle of criticism, not affording sufficient ground for either your practice or ours. It is conceded by all men of sense, that no doctrine should be founded upon a single passage of scripture, when that passage is not perfectly clear in itself ; and especially when there are strong objections upon other grounds to any particular sense given to it. I cannot suppose that you will not readily accede to the correctness of this observation, and if we both govern ourselves by it, our readers will have a fairer view of the controversy than they otherwise would have.

In the whole progress of this dispute, I have intended, and I believe my intention has been fulfilled, not to infer any thing upon incompetent evidence—not to rest the point contended for upon any single evidence—to pay no regard to any obscure passage in the Fathers—to indulge in no surmises—to place no dependence upon names; and to exhibit no evidence that would not be deemed sufficient proof for any other matter of fact, were there no interest of any kind to be served by it. Upon these grounds, I reject the interpretation which you give of these texts; and although I think our interpretation well supported, yet I am willing, in order to prevent endless disputation, to relinquish it. On both sides, then, these texts must be struck out of the question.

“The fourth source of direct proof in favour of the Presbyterian plan of church government,” you tell us, “is found in the model of the *Jewish synagogue*, and in the abundant evidence which the scriptures afford, that the Christian church was formed after the same model.”

This is a point which will require much discussion. It will, therefore, be more convenient to make it one of the topics of the next letter.

LETTER XII.

REV. SIR,

THE question now before us is, was the Christian church formed upon the model of the *Jewish synagogue*? I answer, in my opinion, it was not; but if it was, in some immaterial respects, it certainly was not in any thing essential.

1. The Jewish synagogue had its *αρχιτυναγωγοι*, or Rulers;* with the Minister, Angel, or Bishop, who led the public devotions; but their authority was confined to a single congregation. This was not the case in the Christian church. It has been proved by abundant, and uncontrollable evidence, that the authority of the Christian Bishop, with his bench of Elders, extended over numerous congregations; so that, in this respect, which is a very material one, there is an important point of disparity. Will you, Sir, be governed by *fact*, or by *fanciful* resemblance?

2. The Minister of the synagogue was not the standing Moderator of the Presbytery, as, by your own acknowledgment, the Christian Bishop was. This is another point of difference.

* Mark v. 22. Acts xiii. 15.

3. The *Jewish synagogue* had no mystical and significant symbols ; but the Christian church has. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are important mystical rites of the latter, to which the Jewish synagogue was totally a stranger. Baptism is administered for the remission of sins, and is the rite of admission into the Christian church. But there was no such rite of admission into the Jewish synagogue. The holy Eucharist exhibits Christ's body broken, and his blood shed upon the cross ; and whoever eats the mystical, sacramental bread, and drinks of the mystical, sacramental cup, with faith and penitence, partakes of the benefits of Christ's death and passion. These two rites set the Christian church at a great distance, and give it a very different character, from the Jewish synagogue.

4. The *latter* was principally a school of morality ; but the *former* is both a school of morality and religion ; for there never was any religious institution without mystical, symbolical rites. From the first promise of a Redeemer, which was the foundation of the Christian church, to its completion by Christ after his resurrection, God's mercy to fallen man was signified by mystical rites, and man's obedience put to the trial by demanding from him an observance of these rites. And wherever those rites are wanting, the religion of a fallen creature is wanting. This was strikingly the case in the Jewish synagogue. Its worship, therefore, was

materially different from that of the Christian church.

5. The *Jewish synagogue* was not only thus materially different, but still further, it was no church at all. The Greek word *Εκκλησια*, from *εκκαλεω*, to *call out*, signifies a society *called*, or *chosen out of* the world. Till it is so called out of the world, or from the mass of mankind, it can have no being; “but it cannot call itself, any more than a man can bring himself into the world. Our Christian calling is as truly the work of God, and as much independent of ourselves as our natural birth.”* The church is not a mere voluntary association, as the Jewish synagogue was; an association that might be shaped into any form which men please to give it, and which might be abolished and revived according to men’s humour; but it is a society formed by God, and into which fallen, sinful men are introduced by his ministers, with some mystical rite, expressive of God’s good will towards them;—a society, in which, the forgiveness of sins is promised and granted by God, and upon which the *Holy Ghost* sheds his influences to qualify its members for eternal happiness. These characters are essential to a divinely instituted church; but the Jewish synagogue was totally destitute of them. It, therefore, was no church.

What further proves this point, if it need any

* Rev. William Jones’ Essay on the Church, p. 26.

Further proof, is, that the Jewish church was composed of all circumcised Jews, united together by the *Temple* service and priesthood. Into this society all the males were introduced by the mystical rite of circumcision, and they could not with impunity decline this association. Not so in the Jewish synagogue. No man was under an obligation to be a member of *that*; he might, or might not, just as he pleased; for it was a mere human institution. It was enough for him, if he attended the temple service, and complied with its rites and ceremonies: to this he was obligated, and no human power could absolve him from it. To him the temple was the centre of religious unity, and not the synagogue. The synagogue, therefore, was no part of the Jewish church.

6. As the temple service and priesthood were the centre of unity to the Jews, so in the Christian church, the public worship, and sacraments, and ministry, (whether the ministry be, strictly speaking, a priesthood or not) is the centre of religious unity; and no one, upon Christian principles, can be deemed a member of Christ's visible, mystical body, who has not been baptized, and thereby received into the Christian church. Of these, the Jewish synagogue was totally destitute; and was never considered, either by Jews or Christians, as a centre of unity. The Christian church then being so essentially different, could not have been formed upon the plan of the *Jewish synagogue*.

By attending to these important considerations, we shall be able with ease to determine the correctness of your reasoning upon this point.

You observe, first, "the temple service was throughout, typical, and ceremonial, and of course, was done away by the coming of Christ." This, Sir, is by no means correct. In the temple service, there were prayers, and praises, and blessings; so there were in the Jewish synagogue, and so there are in the Christian church. In every religious institution, there must necessarily be some points of coincidence; but to argue from this, that any particular institution was copied from another, when the resemblance arises from the very nature of the case, is extremely weak. At this rate, I can prove that the temple service was taken from the worship of the *Egyptian Isis* and *Osiris*, and that of the Christian church from the worship in the temples of the *Persian Magi*. Where God is worshipped with any tolerable rationality, there must necessarily be a mixture of *moral* acts with *ceremonial* observances. The few points of coincidence, therefore, between the synagogue and the Christian church, necessarily springing out of the very nature of those institutions, afford no ground whatever for asserting, that Christ's church was formed after the Jewish synagogue. Nay, had the *latter* never existed, the *former* would have been just what it is.

Another erroneous ground which, I conceive, you have taken upon this point, is contained in the fol-

lowing assertion, that “ the *synagogue* worship was that part of the organized religious establishment of the Old Testament church, which, like the decalogue, was purely moral and spiritual, or at least chiefly so; and, therefore, in its leading characters, proper to be adopted under any dispensation.” Now, Sir, if I do not greatly deceive myself, I have shown, that the *synagogue* worship was no part at all of the Jewish church, that it was destitute of some of the essential characters of a church, and that the people were not obliged, by any divine authority, to attend its service. The *religious*, indeed, frequented it, but not under the idea of its being the service of a church—that no Jew could possibly have entertained, without entertaining a principle that would necessarily have produced schism. Our Saviour, too, and his Apostles frequented the *synagogue*, as they would have done any moral and religious association; but they give us not the least hint, that they thought it a part of the Old Testament church. Indeed, it is so evident that neither Jews nor Christians ever considered the *synagogue* as a part of the church, that it is not worth while to say any thing more upon the subject. It *could not* be a church in the proper meaning of the word, as has been already observed; for a church is a *divine* institution; but the *synagogue* was altogether *human*, and, therefore, essentially different.

This I take to be the root of the error into

which, I conceive, so many have run upon this subject. Once settle the true notion of a church, and all that you have said to prove your point falls, of course, to the ground.

Another argument that you use to prove conformity between the *synagogue* and the Christian church, is, that the words *synagogue* and *church* have the same signification. This, from a scholar, is astonishing. How easy and evident is the distinction! They both imply an *assembly*, and so far, therefore, they agree. In this sense, the word *synagogue* may always be changed for the word *church*; but here we must stop—we can go no farther. I have shown that a church is an *assembly* of a particular nature, marked with particular characters, divinely instituted in its ministry, in its sacraments, in its principle of unity; and, therefore, at a great distance from a mere *synagogue* or *assembly* of people met together even for religious purposes. The community of signification, then, between a *synagogue*, or *assembly*, and a *church*, so far as they mean a *collection* of people, is one of the greatest fallacies that I have ever seen. It is that which *logicians* call an *imperfect enumeration*, or a *false induction*; when, from one or two points of coincidence, a general proposition is inferred.

You appear to me, Sir, to be sensible, that this mode of reasoning will not be deemed of much weight, for you say, “I am aware that this coincidence in the meaning of these words is not ab-

solutely conclusive." These are soft words. It should be said—this is a perfect *sophism*; and, therefore, deserves contempt.

Your next argument in favour of your hypothesis, is, that "the mode of worship adopted in the Christian church by the Apostles, was substantially the same with that which had long been practised in the synagogue."

To this I have already given a reply, viz. that wherever there is any rational worship, there must necessarily be some points of coincidence. In the *Jewish* temple there were prayers and praises—in the *synagogue* that was also the case; and in the Christian church, we worship God in the same manner. This arises from the very nature of religion. Accordingly, we find these things in every modification of *gentilism*. What is the inference? Is it, that all modes of worship were taken from one particular model? Certainly not.

Your third argument in favour of your hypothesis has as little force in it as the preceding. You say, "The titles given to the officers of the *synagogue* were transferred to the officers of the Christian church;" and your presumptive inference from this is, that the one was probably copied from the other. No mode of reasoning can be more fallacious than this. The title of Bishop, which was sometimes given to the minister of the *synagogue*, you very well know, Sir, signifies an *overseer*, as it is rendered, *Acts* xx. 4. This very title the *Athenians*

gave to those officers whom they sent to supervise the cities under their government: they were called *Επισκοποι και φυλακες*—*Bishops and Guardians*.* In the same sense, *Plutarch* often uses this word, as when he calls *Numa* the Bishop of the *vestal virgins*.† *Cicero* also informs us, that *Pompey* made him *Overseer*, or Bishop of *Campania*, and the whole sea coast.‡ Now, Sir, I think I am full as much at liberty to indulge my fancy, as you are to indulge yours; and to suppose, that the Apostles in forming the ministry of the Christian church, had an eye to the *Athenian* and *Roman* governments, and that they regulated the powers of the *Christian* Bishop by those of the *civil* Bishop. If there be any thing in sameness of title, I see not why my presumptive argument is not as good as yours. And as to the *Elders*, translated *Πρεσβυτεροι* by the *Seventy*, we read of them ages before the synagogue had an existence; and we know that they were no more than *civil* rulers among the Jews. The framers of the *synagogue* service and ministry adopted this title for their rulers. You might, therefore, with as much propriety, infer from this circumstance, that the *synagogue* was formed upon the model of the *Sanhedrim*, as that the Christian church was formed upon the plan of the synagogue. The title too of Deacon, which is very indefinite, and generally signifies an inferior minister, we

* Suidas in Episcopo. † In Numa. ‡ Ad Atticum, l. 7.

find in the Christian church, the Jewish synagogue, and the Heathen temples. And yet these slight coincidences afford you ground to *presume*, that the church of Christ was formed upon the plan of the synagogue; and *that* too when the former is essentially different from the latter, and also in opposition to complete evidence that Episcopacy was not *congregational*, but *diocesan*.

Your fourth presumptive proof is, that, "Not only the titles of officers, but also their characters, duties, and powers, in substance, were transferred from the synagogue to the Christian church. The *Bishop* or *Pastor* who presided in each synagogue, directed the reading of the law; expounded it when read; offered up public prayers; and, in short, took the lead in conducting the public service of the synagogue. This description applies with remarkable exactness to the duties and powers of the Christian Bishop."

To this much reply is not necessary. It has been fully proved, that the characters of the Jewish and of the Christian Bishop were essentially different. The Jewish was not the minister of God to the people, but the minister of the people to God. The Christian Bishop is the minister of Christ, his Ambassador to the people, the Steward of his household, holding a commission from him to minister in holy things, and to *beseech men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God*. This is an important distinction, which makes the *characters* of these two

officers essentially different. The *one* holds a *divine* commission; the other a *human*: the *one* carries from God a message of life, and peace, and everlasting salvation; the *other* was merely the mouth of the people, and their instructor in the law of *Moses*;—and in that respect was called the *angel*, or *messenger* of the people to speak to God in prayer for them, but not the angel of God with a message of peace to the people;—the *one* administers the seals of the *covenant of grace*, and preaches authoritatively;—the *other* had no seals entrusted to him; nor did he preach by divine authority. So grossly, Sir, do you err, when you assert, that the Jewish and the Christian Bishop were of the same character.

And as the characters of these two officers were materially different; so also, of necessity, were their duties and powers. This has been sufficiently evinced by the foregoing observations.

Further: The Elders also of the Jewish synagogue, were essentially different from the Elders of the Christian church. The *latter* have a *divine* commission for preaching the word, and administering the sacraments; the *former* confined themselves entirely to the temporalities of the synagogue. They rather correspond with the *lay-Elders* of your church, and like them derived their authority from the congregation. These, in the New Testament, are called the *rulers of the synagogue*, and are of a totally different character from

the Presbyters, or Elders of the Christian church. So also the inferior ministers of the synagogue, who were called *chazanim*, that is, *overseers*, and whom we call Deacons, differed materially from the Deacons of our church, and in several respects from the Deacons in yours. "They had," says Prideaux,* "the charge and oversight of all things in the synagogue; they kept the sacred books of the Law and the Prophets, and other Holy Scriptures, as also the books of their public liturgies,† and all utensils belonging to the synagogue. And particularly, they stood by and overlooked them that read the lessons out of the Law and the Prophets, and corrected them when they read amiss, and took the book when they had done." In this inferior ministry also there was some difference, as well as some resemblance, in the temple of the Jews, in the temples of the Heathen, and in the Christian church; but in the latter, the difference was very wide. The Deacons in the primitive church preached by the Bishop's authority, and assisted in distributing the elements in the Holy Eucharist. The *chazanim*, or *overseers* of the synagogue did no such thing.

There cannot possibly be any thing more weak and fallacious, than arguing from names to things.

* Connect. vol. ii. p. 554.

† That a form of prayer was used in the Synagogue no one denies. But Dr. M. took care not to include that in his points of conformity.

To give an instance or two. It is well known, that the *Egyptians* made out of the *papyrus*, which was a sort of bulrush growing in the marshes about the *Nile*, a substance upon which they wrote ; thence called *paper* ; therefore, according to your presumptive mode of reasoning, our *paper* and their *papyrus* are the same thing. Again : In times more ancient than the use of the *papyrus*, the way of writing was upon the inner bark of a tree, called in Latin *liber* ; hence a book was called *liber*, and continued to be so called after the *papyrus* was discovered, and bark entirely laid aside ; therefore, Latin books written upon the *papyrus*, and upon the *bark of a tree*, were precisely the same thing. These instances may be multiplied to almost any number, and they clearly show the weakness of such a mode of reasoning.

I have now proved, I think, with great force of evidence, that the characters, the powers and the authority of the Jewish and Christian Bishops and Presbyters were essentially different ;—that the one are the ministers of a church divinely instituted ;—that the synagogue was no church, but a mere human institution ; and, therefore, its ministers were of human appointment ;—that they were the ministers of the people to God, but not the ministers of God to the people ; and that, consequently, the Christian church could not possibly have been formed upon the model of the Jewish synagogue.

Nor does the imposition of hands, in the ordina-

tion of the synagogue officers, and of those of the church, give them the least degree of similarity of character. The priesthood, by descent, was necessarily altered, as the church was to be spread over the whole world, and no longer to be confined to a particular nation. Some rite was necessary when men were invested with the ministerial character; and none is more decent than that of imposing hands, to which the Jews had been long used on various occasions. The Elders of the Sanhedrim, who were civil officers, were ordained by that rite; and priestly and parental blessings were pronounced with the same ceremony. The sameness of the rite, therefore, proves nothing. It does not so much as determine what the designation is; whether to a civil or religious office; whether it accompanies a blessing, or communicates authority.

If I can trust my own judgment, I have now fully refuted your fourth presumptive argument.

I shall, in the next place, consider your second and third presumptive arguments in favour of Presbyterian parity.

Your second is founded upon the convertibility of the words Bishop and Presbyter. That Presbyters are called Bishops, I readily grant; and I also grant that this proves, that the officer who was then called a Presbyter, was the very same that was then called a Bishop; and, consequently, the office was the same. But this gives you no support whatever. It is, in truth, a perfect fallacy, as will appear from the fol-

lowing observations by Bishop *Hoadly*. "This," says he, "will not prove that these very persons were not always subject to other *church officers*, and at this very time to such as *Timothy* and *Titus*, as well as to the Apostles themselves; this will not prove them to be the same in their office with those who were afterwards called Bishops in an eminent sense; this will prove nothing, but that Presbyters are invested with all those powers which belonged to those who were called Bishops in the New Testament. But what those powers were, cannot be concluded from hence. Indeed, if our argument stood thus, that Bishops, now peculiarly so called, inherit the office of those who were sometimes called Bishops in the New Testament, the present plea would certainly be good, that they who are now peculiarly called Presbyters, have the same office of right belonging to them, which are claimed by those peculiarly called Bishops, because they are the officers called Bishops in the New Testament. But when our assertion is, that Bishops eminently so called answer *not* to those who are sometimes called so in the New Testament, but to those superior church officers, whose office we find there to have been to govern and ordain, and that Presbyters have no right originally to exercise some of those functions, which were exercised by such ecclesiastical officers as *Timothy* and *Titus*: I say, when these are our positions, it can signify nothing to allege that Presbyters are the officers who were

called Bishops in the New Testament; because this will entitle them only to the office of those who are there called Bishops, not to that of those who were acknowledged to be superior to those there called Bishops. To allege this can signify nothing, unless it be included in the signification of the word *ἐπίσκοπος*, Bishops, that all who were ever called so, were entitled to *ordain* and *govern*, as well as to *teach* their flocks. But that this is included in the word, was never so much as pretended. It being, therefore, a sufficient ground of the Presbyters being called Bishops, that they are, in a very proper sense, *overseers*, and have the *care* of souls entrusted to them, which is all that is implied, it doth not follow from their being called so, that they had other powers which are not necessarily included in that word. If they have powers sufficient to make that name proper to their office, this, I say, was a sufficient ground why that name was given them, before there was any design of fixing peculiar names to all the ecclesiastical officers. But they have powers which are a sufficient ground for that name, without supposing them empowered to ordain others: Therefore it cannot follow from their being called *Bishops* in the New Testament, that they are entrusted with the right of ordination; or that they are called to all the offices claimed by Bishops eminently so styled in modern times.”*

This, Sir, is strong and conclusive reasoning. It shows that the community of names proves nothing. If you would state the case fairly, it would require but little intellect to perceive the fallacy of this mode of reasoning. I will give to your argument the form of a syllogism, and then the weakness of it will strike every reader.

Officers who are invested with the same character and powers must hold the same office.

But Presbyters and Bishops are invested with the same character and powers:

Therefore, there are no higher officers in the church than those named Bishops and Presbyters in the New Testament.

Now, Sir, is it not evident, that the conclusion has nothing to do with the premises? The conclusion still remains to be proved; and the community of names does not put you one step nearer to your point. It does not prove that the Apostles were not superior to those Bishops or Presbyters: It does not prove that *Timothy* and *Titus* were not superior to those Bishops or Presbyters: It does not prove that those Bishops or Presbyters had the power of ordaining committed to them: It does not prove that those officers who succeeded *Timothy* and *Titus*, and to whom the title of Bishop was appropriated about the beginning of the second century, did not hold a superiority over Presbyters. What, then, does it prove? Just nothing at all to your purpose.

It has always astonished me, to find men of sense and learning bringing forward this community of names to prove a parity in the ministry, when it proves only that the second order had a double title. You must prove, Sir, by other arguments, that, in the Apostolic age, there was but one order of ministers in the church, and that the power of ordination was committed by the Apostles to those called Bishops and Presbyters. If Bishops, peculiarly so called, succeeded to those called Bishops or Presbyters in the New Testament, then your argument would be good. But we say, and think we can easily prove, that they succeeded to such officers as *Timothy* and *Titus*, to whom the power of ordination was committed, and who were, in consequence, invested with a superior character to that of these Presbyters and Bishops. For any person to attempt to prove, from the double title given to those officers, over whom *Timothy* and *Titus* presided, that they and their governors were all upon a foot of parity, is perfectly ridiculous. And equally ridiculous it is to infer, that, because the successors to the authority which *Timothy* and *Titus* exercised over the Presbyters, had one of their titles, by ecclesiastical usage, appropriated to them, therefore they are not of Apostolic institution. Really, Sir, whatever you may think of the matter, or however you may complain of it, it is a mode of reasoning unworthy of scholars, and deserving all the contempt with which it can possibly be treated.

But, still persisting in this illogical mode of reasoning, you ask,* “Have those who reject all reasoning, drawn from the application of scriptural *names*, considered, whither this principle will lead them? Have they reflected how large a portion of those weapons with which they defend the divine character, and the vicarious sacrifice of the blessed Redeemer, against the attacks of Socinians, and other heretics, are necessarily surrendered, if the *names* and *titles* of scripture are so vague and indecisive as they would, in this case, represent them? Will they venture to charge the great Head of the church, who dictated the scriptures, with addressing his people in a language altogether indistinct, and calculated to mislead them, and that too on a subject which, they tell us, lies at the foundation, not merely of the *welfare*, but of the very *existence* of the church? Surely these consequences cannot have been considered. The argument, then, drawn from the indiscriminate application of the *names* *Bishop* and *Presbyter* to the same persons, is conclusive. It was pronounced to be so by the venerable and learned *Jerome*, more than one thousand four hundred years ago; and his judgment has been adopted and supported by some of the greatest and best divines that have adorned the Christian church, from that period down to the present day.”

* Page 40.

Now, Sir, I do assure you, that I have fully considered, whither rejecting all reasoning from scriptural names will lead us. But before I discuss this point, I must object to your mode of stating it. We do not reject *all* reasoning from scripture names. We give them all the weight they will bear, but no more. We extend them as far as they ought to be extended, but no farther. Thus with respect to the name *Bishop*, or *Overseer*. It was very properly applied to Presbyters; for they are the *Overseers* of the *flock*; and *St. Paul* gives it that extension, but no more. The word does not necessarily imply, that those Presbyters had not their *Overseers* also by the Apostles' appointment—that *Timothy* and *Titus* were not *Bishops* of *Bishops*—*Overseers* of *Overseers*. This is precisely the distinction which the Apostle himself makes. *Timothy* and *Titus* were, beyond all reasonable controversy, sent to *Ephesus* and *Crete* to govern those very Presbyters, to whom he gives the name of *Overseers*. *Timothy* and *Titus* governed both *clergy* and *people*—the Presbyters, the *people* only. Thus we evidently give to the name *Bishop* all the weight it will bear—all the extension that the office obliges us to give it. The Presbyters of *Ephesus*, from their being called *Overseers* must have had something to *oversee*: That is all the name *necessarily* implies. But what is that *something*? The Apostle tells us—the *flock*. Farther than this we cannot extend the name. But *you* do, and therefore *assume*. You rest your conclusion

upon false grounds. You, in effect, say, Presbyters are styled Bishops; therefore there can be no superior officer in the church of Christ: Or, the Presbyters of *Ephesus* are called *Overseers*; therefore they had no officer to *oversee* them. This is mere fallacy, and gross mistatement, and can give nothing but a false view of the subject.

Our readers will now see, that you are by no means correct when you say, that we reject *all* reasoning from names. When a name clearly indicates the nature of an office, and *so far* as it indicates it, we consider it as good evidence, but we reject with great propriety any thing beyond this. Names are not always to be depended upon; because, in few cases, are they determinate. Thus, in the two important points of doctrine, about which you express so much fear, if we give up the argument from names. No man believes the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the atonement, more firmly than I do; but I should be very sorry that we had no other proof than names afford for those important doctrines. The proof of the Trinity we do not rest principally upon names, but upon characters and attributes. Christ is called God; but Magistrates also are called Gods; nothing clear and decisive, therefore, can be inferred from this title. Accordingly, the Arians and Socinians freely give it to Christ. But, when the scripture says, this *God* created all things, we then have a right to ascribe to him the attribute of omnipotence, and that is an attribute of

Deity. Or, when omnipresence and omniscience are ascribed to Christ, then it follows, that Christ is God in the strict and proper sense. But, on the other hand, when Christ is styled, *Jehovah, our Righteousness*; the word *Jehovah* fixes the character of Christ in the most precise and determinate manner, as the word implies self-existence; and, consequently, Christ must be God in a strict and proper sense. Similar observations may be made with respect to the atonement. Christ is called our *Saviour*, our *Intercessor*, our *Propitiation*; but these names do not necessarily establish the notion of an atonement. But when it is said, that Christ *shed his blood to reconcile us to God*—that *we are redeemed by his blood* shed for us on the cross—that *by his stripes we are healed*; and when many other expressions are used which imply that Christ offered to God such a satisfaction, that he could be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in his Son, we can then ascertain the precise meaning of the several titles given to Christ. If these observations be correct, we need not be apprehensive about the important doctrines of the *Trinity* and *atonement*, when we reject the argument drawn from names, when those names do not determine the office or character of the person to whom they are given.

But, Sir, after all, this argument from names in the present case, is a complete fallacy, and a gross misstatement of the point in dispute. The question is not, as I have already observed, whether a Pres-

byter is called a Bishop; that we acknowledge; but whether that officer, with a double title, was equal in point of dignity and jurisdiction, in point of office, character and powers, with *Timothy*, and *Titus*, and *Barnabas*, and *St. Paul*, and the twelve. It is obvious to common sense, that this question can never be determined by saying, that Presbyters are called Bishops. If you would prove the parity of Presbyters with the above-named rulers of the Christian church, you must prove that they had equal authority, equal powers, and, consequently, equal rank. This requires the evidence of fact; and, therefore, talk as much as you please about Presbyters being called Bishops, you will say nothing to the point in dispute. We have no dispute with you upon that particular; but we say it is arrant sophistry, and totally unworthy of men of sense and learning, to infer that there was no officer in the church superior to those Presbyters or Bishops. Suppose Presbyters had continued to be called Bishops down to the present day, and that those for ages called Bishops, had continued to be called Apostles, what would you infer then from this double title? That Presbyters were equal to Apostles? Hardly. The fallacy would be too palpable. But it is as real in the present case, though not *seemingly* so. The taking the title of Bishop, which belonged to the second order, and dropping that of Apostle, which belonged to the first, makes no kind of alteration in the nature and powers of the office. The successors

of the Apostles, under the title of Bishops, are precisely the same that they would have been under the title of Apostles ; and yet this trivial circumstance has ever put it in the power of our opponents to raise a mist about as plain a case as can possibly be conceived. But let our readers keep their attention fixed upon nothing but facts—upon things instead of words, and then the mist vanishes immediately.

You inform us, Sir, that “ the venerable and learned *Jerome*, more than 1400 years ago,” pronounced that the argument from the community of names is valid ; and that “ some of the greatest and best divines that have adorned the Christian church, from that period down to the present day, have been of the same opinion.”

Here, again, the same fallacy insinuates itself. What does *Jerome* acknowledge ? Simply this :—That Presbyters were also called Bishops. But does he infer from that circumstance, that there was no officer in the church superior to those Presbyters or Bishops ? Very far from it. He knew the fact to be otherwise, if we may believe himself ; for he asserts in the most unequivocal manner, that *Timothy* was, in the ecclesiastical sense of the word, Bishop of *Ephesus*, *Titus* of *Crete*, *Epaphroditus* of *Philippi*, *Polycarp* of *Smyrna*, &c. And he asserts, that to Bishops, as succeeding to the Apostolical pre-eminence, belongs the right of confirming and ordaining, and that Presbyters hold the second place in the church by Apostolical institution. All

this has been fully proved in my first letter. Now, it is impossible that *Jerome*, without flatly contradicting himself, can maintain what you ascribe to him. No, Sir; all that he asserts is a community of names, and from that circumstance he infers, very illogically indeed, that Bishops, in the ecclesiastical sense, were not placed over the churches till after the schism at *Corinth*; but that after that event, they were established by Apostolical authority. This is *Jerome's* doctrine, as clearly as that the sun shines in the firmament. Nor is there one of the Fathers who inferred a parity of ministers from the community of names; but all acknowledge, that the order, by the church called Bishops, is of Apostolic and divine institution.

I have now, I think, said sufficient to show that your second, third, and fourth presumptive arguments have nothing solid in them. They may be a proof of the ingenuity of the *first inventors*, and may be pretty well calculated to mislead the unwary; but they never can make the least impression upon those who understand this subject.

I shall now, Sir, before I examine your *first*, but, in the order in which I have exhibited the evidence for Episcopacy, the *fourth* presumptive argument, give a view of the support we derive from the state of the church of *Jerusalem*.

I do not find that you have taken any notice of the church of *Jerusalem*. You certainly ought, for you very well know that Episcopalians always bring

it forward as a proof of *diocesan* Episcopacy. The first Christian church that ever was formed deserved particular attention, as we may very reasonably suppose that all other churches were formed upon that model. I think, upon examination, we shall find this church affording strong support to our cause.

From the holy scriptures we learn, that there were myriads of Christians at *Jerusalem*; and consequently, numerous congregations. That *St. James* presided over these congregations, and over the Presbyters who officiated in them, is evident from the *Acts of the Apostles*. The part which he acted cannot be accounted for on any other supposition, than that he really was what the concurring testimony of all antiquity represents him, the fixed Bishop of the particular church of *Jerusalem*. When *Peter* was miraculously delivered from prison (*Acts xii.*) he said, "Go show these things to *James*, and to the brethren." But why to *James* in particular? Or, why were the brethren with *James* rather than with *John*, who had not *then*, nor for at least *four years afterwards*, left *Jerusalem*?* When *Paul* and his company went up from *Cæsarea*, (*Acts xxi.*) "the brethren received them gladly; and the day following they went in unto *James*; and all the Elders were present." What induced them to go in unto *James* in particular; and how came all the Elders to be with *James*? In the se-

* See this proved by Dr. Cave, in his life of St. John.

cond chapter of the Epistle to the *Galatians*, *St. Paul* says, that when “*Peter* came to *Antioch*, he withstood him to the face, because that before certain came from *James*, he (*Peter*) did eat with the Gentiles,” &c. What induced *St. Paul* to say that those who came from *Judea*, came from *James* rather than from the other Apostles and Elders, of whom, many were then residing at *Jerusalem*? If *St. James* was the proper Bishop of *Jerusalem*, all these facts, which upon any other supposition must appear very strange, were perfectly natural; for, to what individual of the church should *St. Peter* have sent so early an account of his deliverance from prison, as to the Bishop? To whom was it so expedient, that *St. Paul* should give an account of the “things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry,” as to the Bishop and Presbyters of the church of the *Hebrews*? And could any thing be more natural than to say, that certain brethren, who came to *Antioch* from the church of *Judea*, came from the governor of that church?*

So evident it is that *James* was Bishop of *Jerusalem*, that even *Calvin* thinks it highly probable, that he was governor of that church. “When,” says he, “the question is concerning dignity, it is wonderful that *James* should be preferred before *Peter*. Perhaps it was, because he was *Præfect* of

* See the Anti-Jacobin Review of Campbell's Lectures, vol. ix. p. 116, 117.

the church of *Jerusalem*.”* *Calvin* did not choose to speak plainer; for that would have been in direct contravention to his ecclesiastical regimen.

I have but one or two things more to observe with respect to the Episcopal authority of *St. James*. After the council holden at *Jerusalem*, we find him always in his diocese. *St. Paul*, in his epistle to the *Galatians*, observes, that some Jews came from him to *Antioch*. Upon which *St. Augustine* observes, “they came from *Judea*; for *James* governed the church of *Jerusalem*.”†

Several years after this *St. Paul* returned to *Jerusalem*, and there he found *St. James*, and the Presbyters with him. (Acts xviii.) “*James*,” as *Chrysostom* informs us, “was that great and admirable man, who was brother to our Lord, and bishop of *Jerusalem*.”‡

During the whole of *St. James*’s government of the church of *Jerusalem*, we have not the least hint that he was ever absent from his charge, if that be of any consequence. So constant was his residence, that even the *Jewish Rabbies* were acquainted with his miracles, and have preserved the remembrance of them.§ *Josephus* also speaks of him as sustaining a high character.||

* In Galat c. ii. v. 9.

† Ab Jacobo, id est a *Judea*; nam ecclesie Hierosolymitanæ Jacobus præfuit, vol. iv. p. 379.

‡ Vol. iv. p. 864.

§ Castell Lex 2869.

|| Ant. l. xx. c. 8, et apud Origen Com. Matt. p. 223. Vide etiam Burscough, p. 73, 74.

Another circumstance which proves our point, is the succession of *Simeon* to *James*, according to the unanimous report of the *Ancients*. *Burscough* says, “the remembrance of it was preserved by the *Ethiopians* in their *Dyptichs*;* by the *Coptites* in their *Fasti*;† and by the *Syrians* in their *Menology*.”‡ *St. James* is expressly said by *Hegesippus*, who wrote in the second century, to have been appointed Bishop of *Jerusalem* by the *Apostles*.|| *Ignatius*, who was Bishop of *Antioch*, a very short time after the death of *St. James*, affirms that *St. Stephen* was Deacon to *St. James*.§ *Clement* of *Alexandria*, who flourished at the close of the second century, is quoted by *Eusebius* as saying, that immediately “after the assumption of Christ, *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, did not contend for the honour of presiding over the church of *Jerusalem*, but, with the rest of the *Apostles*, chose *James the just* to be Bishop of that church.”¶ It was also received as an undoubted fact by *Hippolytus*—by *Cyril* of *Jerusalem*, and another *Cyril* of *Scythopolis*—by *Epiphanius*, and *Chrysostom*—by *Augustine*, and *Fulgentius*—by *Nicephorus* and *Photius*—by *Oecumenius* and *Nihus*. And it was also mentioned as a matter universally acknow-

* Ludolf. Com. ad Hist. Ethiop. p. 342.

† Abeodem Ludolf. l. 3. p. 66.

‡ Cambesis Not. in Auct. l. 2.

|| Apud Euseb. l. 2. c. 23.

§ Ep. ad Trall.

¶ Apud Euseb. l. 2. c. 1.

ledged by the *sixth general council*;* and *Blondel* himself confesses, that it was asserted by all the Fathers.†

It does not appear to me possible, to produce any matter of fact that is supported by clearer and stronger evidence than this. Is there stronger evidence that *Romulus* was the founder of *Rome*, that *Numa* was the second king of the *Romans*, that *Junius Brutus* and *Tarquinius Collatinus* were the first consuls? There certainly is not. The testimonies to these facts, do not stand so near the events as the testimonies to the point in question; nor were these facts more universally believed by the *Romans* in all subsequent ages, than that *St. James* was Bishop of *Jerusalem* was believed by Christians in all subsequent ages. There is not the least contradiction, not one dissenting voice. Even *Jerome*, whom you acknowledge to be a man of great learning and research, bears his testimony to this fact. He affirms,‡ that, “immediately after the passion of our Lord, *James* was constituted Bishop of *Jerusalem*” — Bishop in the ecclesiastical use of the word; the overseer of numerous congregations, and numerous clergy; just such a Bishop as had the supreme power of the keys, of confirmation, and of ordination. Is it not, Sir, a most extraordinary instance of the perverseness of the human mind, that the advocates of parity should be so tenacious of *Jerome*

* Burscough's Church Government, p. 65.

† Apol. p. 50.

‡ In Galat. i. 19.

when he speaks obscurely, and totally regardless of him when he speaks in plain and unequivocal terms ; that they should admire him for the correctness of his *opinion*, when they have the *making* of that opinion ; but reject him for his *testimony*, because that is inflexible ? Yes, Sir, it is a sad instance. But who can say that he is totally free from this weakness ?

There cannot, Sir, be a more rational way of ascertaining the meaning of scripture passages which relate to a fact, than to appeal to the testimony of the ancients. To that testimony I have appealed, and it appears beyond contradiction, that the result is in perfect unison with the interpretation Episcopalians give to the texts relating to *St. James*. If you had the testimony of antiquity coinciding with your sense of those texts, I should immediately concede that we are wrong in our interpretation of them. If this be not the fairest and best way of proceeding, I know not what is. This is precisely the way that I would take, were I disputing with a person, who denied the obligation of Christians to observe the first day of the week. I would acknowledge at once, that there is not in scripture any express precept, nor any clear warrant. I would mention to him the texts which seem to look that way, and I would prove to him, by the testimony of the primitive church, that the sense given to those texts by those who observe the first day of the week, is perfectly correct. And if this would not satisfy him, he must remain in his unbelief.

It is scarcely possible, Sir, to produce texts of scripture for any point whatever, that may not be obscured by plausible objections. Ingenuity is never at a loss ; and when it is excited to exertion by prejudice, and by an attachment to a particular hypothesis, it is extremely difficult to diminish its vigour, and to divest it of all its subterfuges. You know, Sir, that this is strikingly the case with Deism in its attacks upon Revelation, and with Arianism and Socinianism, in their attacks upon the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement. What now is to be done ? Nothing that I know of, but to prove Revelation to be a fact, in the same manner that you would prove any other matter of fact. Prove in the same manner that it is a fact, that the primitive Church believed the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement, and then the fair inference is, that the interpretation we give to the texts relating to these important doctrines, is correct and proper. A better criterion than this, human ingenuity cannot devise.

This is the method I have taken in this and other scripture cases. I have placed no dependence, in relation to the present point, upon any criticism on the Greek word ΚΡΙΝΩ. I know that it has various significations ; and I can see nothing in the circumstances related of the council of *Jerusalem*, that obliges us to give it a sense favourable to Episcopacy. I can see nothing in that transaction that *proves St. James* to be President of that council ; nor have I met with any thing in the ancients that I have con-

sulted, that clearly goes to that point, except one testimony from *Chrysostom*. But I see enough to convince me, that he was at the head of all the Presbyters and congregations in *Jerusalem*. For I find him constantly distinguished from his clergy. He is always mentioned first, and the name of no other Presbyter, however eminent he may have been, is ever given. He is mentioned with marked respect on various occasions. All reports and applications are made to him seated among his Elders, and not to the other Apostles at *Jerusalem*; and his relation to the Elders and to the whole church was, most clearly, fixed and permanent. And to be perfectly certain, that I do not view these circumstances through the medium of prejudice, I have consulted the primitive writers, so far as I have access to them, and I find that they are unanimous in asserting, that *St. James* was Bishop of *Jerusalem*, and that there was a clear and indisputable succession to that *see* for ages. If, Sir, you reject this evidence, I am well satisfied that you must, in order to be consistent, give up several points, of which, you appear to me to have no doubt whatever.

Let us now, Sir, take another position, and view this matter through a Presbyterian glass; and then we shall see *St. James* seated among his Elders as their Moderator; not a temporary one to be sure, but fixed in the *chair* during his life. Let us also view *Timothy*, and *Titus*, and the *seven Angels* as

Moderators also, possessing no power but that of collecting the votes and keeping order. Well; *James* the Moderator of *Jerusalem*, who is so particularly distinguished in the scripture, and who drew upon himself the vengeance of the Jews, by filling the high station of a *chairman* to the Presbytery, was succeeded in his Moderatorship by *Simeon*, who lived till the year 110. *Timothy*, the Moderator of *Ephesus*, and *Titus*, the Moderator of *Crete*, to whom were committed the power of ordaining Elders, and of censuring those Elders, together with the Deacons and Laity of their churches, and, in short, of regulating all ecclesiastical matters, had also their successors to the same Moderatorship. The *Angels* of the seven churches of *Asia Minor*, who are either censured, or praised, for all the corruption, or all the purity in their respective churches, were no more than Moderators, and in this character had likewise their successors. Now, Sir, not to dwell on the utter inconsistency of this notion of a Moderator, with the scriptural account of these persons, how came the ancients to be so grossly mistaken with respect to their character? How came *Ignatius*, who was contemporary with the greater part of these Moderators, and with all their immediate successors, and who was himself the Moderator of the church of *Antioch*, to be so grossly ignorant of the nature of his own, and of their official character? How came he, wise, virtuous, and pious as he was, with a horrible death staring him

in the face, to tell us that this Moderator, whom he calls Bishop, was, under Christ, the visible source of spiritual authority in the church? That without authority from this Moderator, no Presbyter could baptize, and administer the holy Eucharist? How came he to enjoin upon Presbyters, Deacons, and Laymen, submission to this Moderator? How came the Fathers after him to speak the same language, and to brand as heretics two or three who maintained the contrary opinion? Really, Sir, it appears to me a most arduous task, to reconcile the universal sense of the church, with the construction you give to the passages adduced by Episcopalians in favour of their regimen. Those who lived at, or near the times of those Moderators, were totally mistaken with respect to the powers they exercised; but those who live seventeen hundred years after them, know with the utmost certainty, that a Bishop, in the Apostolic age, was no more than a Presbyterian Moderator.

—————Pictoribus atque poetis

Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas.

But I cannot think that those who adopt fanciful interpretations, and grossly violate the truth of facts, are entitled to much indulgence.

In my next, I shall consider the argument founded on the commission given by Christ to his Apostles.

LETTER XIII.

REV. SIR,

I SHALL now proceed to consider your first argument for ministerial parity, viz. “ that Christ gave but one commission for the office of the gospel ministry, and that this office, of course, is one.”* Upon this argument you seem to place great reliance; and you even go so far as to brand with absurdity the contrary supposition.

After the numerous specimens which I have given of mistatements of facts, misrepresentations of passages materially affecting the present discussion, gross and palpable fallacies, unfair views of quotations from Episcopal writers, and numberless bold, unfounded assertions; after, I say, such an ample specimen of these things, I must declare, that I am not at all surprised at what you have asserted, with respect to the commission given by Christ to his Apostles. Your argument is, the commission is but one; the form of investiture is but one; therefore, there is but one order of ministers. This also is a fallacy; for your conclusion, to come to the point, ought to be—therefore, the Apostles did not afterwards divide the powers of the commission. But you well know this would be false reasoning.

* Letter ii. p. 28.

No author, with whom I am acquainted, has discussed this point with greater force of reason than Bishop *Hoadly*. He has, in my judgment, so completely demolished this plea, that I shall do little more than transcribe, in a condensed form, what he has said.*

Supposing, what you contend for, that the passages which you have quoted, imply the whole commission by which the Apostles were empowered to ordain others to succeed them in their ministry; it will not follow, that all whom they appointed to an ecclesiastical office, were appointed to all the offices which you suppose to be included in the words here used. The utmost of what you can contend for, is, that our Saviour commissioned his Apostles to go forth into the world, to endeavour by themselves and others whom they should appoint, to convince men that he was the Messiah; to baptize those who should believe in him; and then to teach all such persons fully the conditions of his institution. And the utmost of what can be included in this commission is this, that the Apostles were required to take care, both by themselves and others whom they were to appoint, that the will of Christ should be performed in these several instances. Well then; what can be collected from hence? Is it not fairly left to the Apostles, (who were afterwards to be endowed with the Holy Ghost) to call persons to

* *Brief Defence*, p. 133, 139.

which of these offices they should see fit? Would they not have completely answered their trust, had they appointed some persons to *baptize*, and not to *teach*; others to *teach*, and not to *ordain*; and others, both to *ordain* and *teach*? And is it not evident, that the commission of others was to be judged of by what the Apostles thought fit to intrust to them, not by what our Saviour thought fit to entrust to the Apostles? The first answer, then, is this, that all the ends of the commission given to the Apostles *might* be answered by their appointing different orders for different offices in the church; and, therefore, that it does not follow, that they must have given the same powers to all whom they ordained.

Nor does it follow, that this is the commission of Presbyters in such a sense, as that they are empowered by it to ordain others, because the Apostles were. This indeed is the point which you, instead of proving, take for granted. You say, there was but one commission, and, therefore, there was but one order of ministers. This is no consequence: It is altogether gratuitous. This may be the original commission, by which, Christ declared to the Apostles, that it was his will, that disciples should be made, baptized, and instructed; and, consequently, that there should be officers in the church for all these purposes; but it does not at all follow, that it was his will that every one who should be appointed to *teach*, should likewise be

empowered to appoint others to *teach*; nor is it in the least implied in the words of the commission. This is the thing to be proved. If, then, it does not result from the nature of the thing, nor from the words of the commission, that the Apostles were obliged to give all *teachers* the power of *ordination*; then must we inquire into the future behaviour of the Apostles, to know what officers they constituted, and what powers they granted to them. Now, I think, it has been abundantly proved, that there is no reason, from any rule laid down, nor from any example mentioned in the New Testament, to think that the power of *ordination* was given to those officers called *Overseers*, or *Presbyters*, notwithstanding that they were called to *teach* Christians, and to *feed the flock of Christ*. It is of no importance to say, that "every minister of the gospel, who has these powers [the powers of *baptizing* and *preaching*] is a successor of the Apostles, is authorized by this commission, and stands on a footing of official equality with those to whom it was originally delivered, so far as their office was ordinary and perpetual."* I say, it is of no importance to say this, since this commission, as has been already observed, did not oblige the Apostles to grant all powers to all teachers in the church; and since you have advanced no proof that this is the commission.

* Letter ii. p. 36.

of Presbyters in any other sense, than as it is the original declaration of Christ; or as the Apostles were certainly commanded, and empowered by it to see that there should be officers for these purposes in the church. But though the Apostles were thus empowered, it does not follow, that every officer they appointed in the church was thus empowered.

Again: Though this commission does not expressly say, that he who is called to *teach* in the church, shall *not* be called to *ordain* likewise, yet it does not follow, that every one who is called to *teach*, is therefore called to *ordain*. It should be particularly remembered, that the Apostles were to be endowed with the Holy Ghost, who was to direct them in the execution of the authority committed to them by Christ; and, consequently, whether but one order was appointed by them for the offices designed to be continued in the church, must be collected from their succeeding practice.

Further: It may as well be proved from hence, that all ecclesiastical *teachers* had, in the first age, the powers of Apostles, as that they have since, the powers of Bishops, properly so called. For, there is no difference at all made in the commission. And, therefore, if this be the commission both of the Apostles, and of the Presbyters whom they ordained, in the same sense; then had those Presbyters the same powers which the Apostles had, in their ordinary, transmissible character. If,

Sir, you will assert that they had, then you flatly contradict the scriptures, and the unanimous voice of antiquity. The Apostles, in their extraordinary powers, had no superiority over others who had those extraordinary powers. Evangelists, Presbyters, Deacons, even Laymen, had those extraordinary powers. There were Prophets, inspired teachers, workers of miracles, those who spoke divers tongues; and *St. Luke*, and *St. Mark*, who were not of the *twelve*, by inspiration wrote the history of our Saviour's life and sufferings. The extraordinary powers of the Apostles, then, were not the foundation of their superiority. It must have arisen from another source, from their possessing the full powers of the commission given them by Christ, which Presbyters did not possess. Hence their supremacy over the Christian church. Now, if the Presbyters did not possess the same ordinary powers with the Apostles, then the power of *ordination*, for any thing that appears to the contrary, may be excepted as well as any other power. And if the Apostles were to be guided by the Holy Ghost in the exercise of their commission, then we must determine, from what they *actually did*, whether they assigned *distinct works* to *distinct officers*. This is the sure way of proceeding, and not that of relying upon our own conjectures and surmises. In a word; granting that the commission given to the Apostles was their sole authority for governing the church, and perpetuating the ministry, there is no

foundation for the conclusion you draw from it, nor have you advanced any thing but your own affirmation in proof of it.

Still farther : I do not see how this commission could have been that, by virtue of which *Matthias* acted as an Apostle. He was called to the Apostolate in a different manner from the other Apostles. To be sure, he was called to the exercise of equal powers with them ; but it was not by virtue of this *commission*. In like manner, I do not see how it could have been that *St. Paul* acted in consequence of this commission, when he was called to the Apostolate in a wonderful manner ; and some time after this commission was given to the other Apostles. And if he did not derive his authority from this commission, how could the Presbyters whom he ordained, plead this commission for their right to ordain ? All the directions we have in the New Testament concerning ordination, are to be found in *St. Paul's* epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus* ; and we may be sure he gave those directions under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. If, then, we find from these epistles that he made a distinction of officers in the church, it is in vain to talk about the *one commission* ; and by no means like a scholar, to infer a parity of officers from the words of the commission, when those words do not necessarily imply it. The words indeed imply a parity of Apostolical powers, and, consequently, a parity of rank among the Apostles, but nothing far-

ther. They afford a good argument to *Protestants* against *Papists*, but not to *Presbyterians* against *Episcopalians*.

Lastly: Either the Apostles might make a distinction in ecclesiastical offices, notwithstanding this commission, or not. If they *might*, then this commission signifies nothing to prove that all who are called to *teach*, are called likewise to *ordain*; and, consequently, if this be granted to be the commission of all Presbyters, it may be a commission to them only to *teach* and *baptize*, and not likewise to *ordain*. If they *might not* make a distinction, then, neither was it left to them to debar the first Presbyters from *ordination*, nor to appoint *Timothy*, and such *superior* officers, to that work. For if it was our Lord's declared will that the same persons that should be called to *teach*, should also be called to *ordain*; how could the Apostles justify their debarring those whom they called to *teach*, from *ordaining*, and appoint other officers for that purpose? Or, what reason can possibly be found out for such a procedure? But I think it has been fully proved, that they *did* debar the first Presbyters from *ordaining*. Whence it follows, that they might, notwithstanding this commission, appoint that some officers should be called to *teach* in the church; and *others*, distinct from these, to *ordain*, as well as to *teach*.

I shall now close this part of our discussion with proposing to your consideration a few questions.

1. How came the Apostle *Paul* to restrain the Presbyters of *Ephesus* and *Crete* from the exercise of their *right* of *ordaining*, without any apology for so doing; without any acknowledgment that this *right* did originally belong to them; without any declaration that it was only for present expediency? Why do we find the first Presbyters dealt with by *St. Paul* exactly as he would have dealt with them, had they been *originally* precluded from the *right* of *ordaining*?

2. If this restraint put upon the Presbyters of *Ephesus* and *Crete* was but for a short time, (as some Presbyterians have supposed) and was designed to be taken off when the ground of the restraint was removed, how comes it that in all the accounts of the primitive church, we read of *single persons* succeeding the Apostles, and such officers as *Timothy* and *Titus*? How comes it that, immediately upon their death, we find the same restraint and the same distinction spoken of with so much zeal in *Ignatius'* epistles?

3. If this restraint upon the Presbyters was designed to be taken off after the death of the Apostles, and was accordingly removed, *how* and *when* was it imposed again upon them? Which is the intermediate time, in which they exercised this right of ordination? Which is the time when the restraint was laid upon them again? And how comes it that their ordinations were always disapproved and condemned, and their *right* to this work always denied? It

will require some ingenuity to answer these questions, consistently with the voice of scripture and antiquity.

I have now, Sir, made what appears to me to be a sufficient reply to your four grand positions, on which you seem to place great reliance ; and if I have been fortunate enough to show their weakness, there is an end of the controversy. Of this, I presume not to judge for any body but myself. Let our readers impartially weigh the evidence on both sides of the question, and then let them conscientiously decide and act.

I will not, Sir, enter into any dispute with you, concerning the nature of the commission given to the seventy disciples before our Saviour's crucifixion. Every thing upon that point is involved in much uncertainty ; and to assert what cannot be proved, is no mark of a judicious controvertist. Granting every thing that some Episcopalians have contended for, still it remains true that the church of Christ, in its explicit, permanent form, was not established till after our Lord's resurrection. I am much of the mind of Bishop *Sage* upon that point.

I shall now, Sir, notice a few more of your observations, and then proceed to examine what you have said in your sixth letter, with respect to the *Reformers* of the church of *England*.

In the first part of your second *letter*, you thus speak : " In all disputes relating either to the faith or the practice of Christians, the first and the grand

question is, *What saith the scripture?* This is the ultimate and the only infallible standard. Whatever is not found in the Bible cannot be considered, in any sense, as essential either to the doctrine or the order of the church. This maxim is especially applicable to the subject now under consideration."

In all discussions by adverse parties, it is necessary that they should express themselves in such a manner, that there can be no room for any mistake about their meaning. This I know requires much attention to perspicuity and precision in the use of words. This perspicuity appears to me to be wanting in the above quotation. Pray, Sir, how do you mean to apply the word *essential*? Do you mean to speak of doctrines, the belief of which is *essential* to salvation? If you do, with whom are you contending? Certainly not with me, nor with any Episcopalian that I know of. It is no part of my creed, that a man cannot be saved who is not an Episcopalian. My charity is very different from that; and I am persuaded, supposing you to be a Calvinist, much more extensive than yours; notwithstanding your charge of *bigotry* against some Episcopalians. *Bigotry* is sometimes a very convenient word in the mouths of opponents, as *Papist* is in the mouths of *Protestants*, and *Arminian* in the mouths of *Calvinists*. Once apply the epithet to which reproach is annexed by party, and the poor man is immediately run down. This

may be good policy, but I doubt whether it is Christian charity.

If you mean by the word *essential*, not what is necessary to salvation, but what is necessary to a correct faith;—I pray, who is to be the judge of the correctness of Christian faith? Is it the Pope, or *Luther*, or *Calvin*, or the Reformers of the church of *England*, or the *General Assembly* of *Scotland*, or the Synod of *Dort*, or the *Westminster Divines*, or any others? Pray, Sir, tell me. If you reply, What is deemed essential to a correct faith by the great body of Christians in all ages, and all countries; then you have recourse to extraneous elucidation, and give up the Bible as being perfectly clear in all points without it. If you say, that every man must determine for himself what is essential to a correct faith; then you make a correct faith what every man chooses to fancy such; and, of course, the standard of correctness is every man's imagination. Then what is correct in one, is incorrect in another. What is essential to a right faith in the judgment of one, is by no means so in the judgment of another. And thus you must either give up your assertion that the Bible alone, in all cases, without any elucidation from the faith and practice of the primitive church, is sufficient to determine what are the essentials of a correct faith; or you must assert, that a right faith is just what every man makes it. The line of distinction which I have drawn upon this subject for my own guidance

is this: What is essential to a *right faith*, and what is essential to *salvation*, are by no means equivalent. A man, whose faith is incorrect in some important points, may still be saved. It is not possible for fallible man to determine, how far a person may proceed in error, without excluding himself from salvation. That belongs to God alone. This is my first distinction; and an important one it is; because it enables me, with perfect consistence, to contend earnestly for what I deem essential to a correct faith, and at the same time extend the utmost charity to those who do not coincide in opinion with me. Thus, although I consider a belief of the doctrine of the Trinity essential to a right Christian faith, yet I dare not say, nor think, that a man cannot be saved who does not believe it. In like manner, I make a distinction between what is essential to an Apostolic church, and what is essential to salvation. I believe Episcopacy essential to an Apostolic church; but I do not believe that it is essential to salvation, that every man be an Episcopalian. And thus, in this case as in the former, I can contend earnestly for being a member of this Episcopal, Apostolical church, in perfect consistence with a belief that numbers who are not of this church, will be finally saved. This is my second distinction; and if I do not deceive myself, it is absolutely necessary to enable me to contend consistently with charity, for what I deem essential to a right faith and right discipline.

If these distinctions be admitted, we shall the more easily determine how far your assertion is true, that the Bible is the only infallible standard of what is essential to the doctrine, or the order of the church.

I acquiesce in this assertion, so far as this,—that when the sense of scripture is ascertained, we are to be absolutely determined by it. Christians can make no appeal from it to any other standard.

But then the question will be, How are we to determine what the sense of scripture is in points relating to faith, and the order of the church? Will you answer, There are certain fixed principles of interpretation, in which men of sense and learning are generally agreed? That is undoubtedly correct; but then another question arises, Who is to apply those principles? Will you say, Undoubtedly, every man must apply them for himself? Then we shall infallibly have different results. A regard to justice is acknowledged by all men to be an indispensable duty; yet two men, who are equal lovers of justice, and equally intelligent, will not see the same action, in reference to the principle of justice, in the same point of light; nay, they will sometimes view it in directly opposite points of light. So it is with respect to the doctrines and government of the church. You say, that there is enough in scripture to determine an impartial inquirer, that the government of the church is *Presbyterian*. We, on the contrary say, that there is enough in scripture to determine an impartial inquirer, that the government of the church is *Epis-*

copal. You say, that you interpret the passages relating to this point upon sound principles of criticism. *We* say, also, that we interpret them upon sound principles of criticism. What now is to be done? Who is to decide between us? There cannot possibly be but one answer, viz. the Christians who lived near the times of the Apostles, are the best judges in this case. As the government of the church is a matter of fact, there is no other way of deciding the dispute. To talk, therefore, of the Bible being the only standard, is a mere fallacy. Nobody doubts that; but that is not the question. The question is, What is the sense of the Bible? Determine that, and then there is no appeal. But neither Presbyterians nor Episcopalians, it seems, can determine it by an appeal to that standard.—There remains then nothing but an appeal to the primitive church. That appeal we have made, and the decision is clearly and decisively in our favour, learned Presbyterians themselves being the judges.

All then that you have said about the Bible's being the only infallible guide, (in disputable matters) can have no other effect but to mislead your readers. It carries indeed a specious appearance, but, when sifted, it amounts to nothing at all.

This is strikingly the case with respect to matters of fact, where there is any difference of opinion. But it is not confined to matters of fact; it extends also to points of doctrine. For instance: We *Trinitarians* say, that the passages relating to the Tri-

nity, are interpreted by us upon sound principles of criticism. The *Arians* and *Socinians* say, that is not the case ; that praise belongs to them. What now is to be done ? Appeal to those who were contemporary with, or very near the times of the Apostles, and you will find it to be a matter of fact, that the doctrine of the Trinity was deemed one of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith ; and this shows that our interpretation of the passages relating to this point, is perfectly correct. And thus it is with respect to every doctrine of Christianity that is disputed. Only make it appear that it is a matter of fact, that it was the Catholic faith in the purest ages of the church, and the scale must be immediately turned in favour of that doctrine ; for the rule of *Vincentius Lirinensis*, and *St. Augustine*, has never yet failed. “ Whatever has been believed at all times, and in all places, and from the beginning, must be Apostolical.” We cannot then, even in points of faith, always decide without much *extraneous* assistance of various kinds. And if this be the case with respect to fundamental points of doctrine, it is certainly more so with respect to some important matters of fact ; such as the change of the Sabbath, infant baptism, and the canon of scripture. Dispute as much as you please upon these points, until you reduce them to matters of fact, you will never throw so much light upon them as to obviate every difficulty. Just so it is with respect to the government of the church.

But, Sir, I need not have given myself the trouble of making these observations. You tell us, in the passage under consideration, that “whatever is not found in the Bible cannot be considered, in any sense, as essential either to the doctrine or the order of the church;” and that “this maxim is especially applicable to the subject now under consideration.” Yet, in another place, you say, “Whoever expects to find any formal or explicit decision on this subject, delivered by Christ or his Apostles, will be disappointed.” Now, what is the inevitable consequence from these two passages? I appeal to every man of common sense, whether it is not one of these two things;—either that the Bible is not a sufficient standard; for what is not explicit can certainly never be a standard; and then the appeal to the Bible is idle; or that, as there is nothing explicit in the Bible upon the subject of church government, it cannot be a matter of any material consequence; for you say, “Whatever is not found in that book, cannot be essential to the order of the church.” Now, what a curiosity is this! A learned divine sits down to write a volume to prove from *scripture*, that Presbyterian government is the only mode instituted by the great *Head* of the church, and that Episcopacy is a wicked usurpation; but in the very outset of his work, he tells his readers, that there is nothing explicit upon the subject in the book to which he appeals; and yet afterwards labours through 123 pages to prove his point from the Bible alone. This stand-

ard then, by his own acknowledgment, is no standard ; and this “ maxim so peculiarly applicable to the present subject,” turns out to be no maxim.

And all this, Sir, you assert directly in the face of your own confession of faith ; which makes a parity of ministers of divine institution ; and, consequently, it must be evidently revealed in scripture. What, Sir, will your brethren say to you, for destroying, by a dash of your pen, all their hopes from scripture testimony ? What will Dr. *Mason* and Mr. *McLeod*, who are such faithful coadjutors, say to you ? They are labouring hard to prove Presbyterian government a divine institution upon the sole ground of scripture ; but you step forth and tell them, there is nothing explicit upon the subject in scripture. Who are we to believe ? You, or them ? Where are we to look for the evidence of this fact ? Not in scripture, for there you say we have nothing explicit. Not in the Fathers ; for they, you tell us, are not unanimous, but contradict one another. In the name of common sense what are we to do ? What a wonderful thing is this ! A mighty fabric has been erected for ages, and exposed, from the very beginning, to the view of all men, and yet no mortal can tell *who* raised it, nor *when* it was raised. And we are involved in this ignorance, as you say, from a want of explicitness in the Bible, and of consistency in the Fathers ; and thus we are left by him who is wisdom itself, to form just such a church as whim, or pre-

judice, or interest, may suggest. This is strange doctrine from a Christian divine.

But, Sir, we Episcopalians are of a very different opinion. We believe, with the *Presbyterian Confession of Faith*, that the constitution of the Christian church is explicitly exhibited in the sacred scripture; and with our own church, that "it is evident unto all men diligently reading holy scriptures and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time, there have been three orders of ministers in Christ's church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." To the scriptures we have appealed, and we have found, (to mention but one instance) *Timothy* exercising Episcopal authority over the Presbyters, Deacons, and Laity of the church of Ephesus; and we have confirmed our interpretation, by the unanimous testimony of the primitive church.

There is another passage in your *Letters*, which, as it has some speciousness, had better be noticed. You say, (p. 14.) "It is certainly contrary to the genius of the gospel dispensation, which is pre-eminently distinguished from the Mosaic economy by its simplicity and spirituality, to place forms of outward order among those things which are essential to the very existence of the church."

This, Sir, is a very vague and indefinite passage. Mere forms of outward order, which have no foundation in any thing but decency and propriety, we consider as very arbitrary and variable; that being deemed proper and decent in one country,

which is not so deemed in another. This mutability in circumstances of this nature, is what our great Episcopal writers contended for against the Puritans of the 16th and 17th centuries. If these be the forms you mean, you totally mistake the question. Circumstances, which, from their very nature are mutable, we maintain are not worth contending for, and no church treats the contrary notion with more contempt than ours. Had the Puritans entertained the same correct opinion upon this point, that the *Church of England* has constantly entertained from the Reformation, history would never have had her pages stained with such shameful violations of Christian unity. But, Sir, if you mean (and you must mean so, to mean any thing to the purpose) that the ministry and the sacraments are mere forms of outward order, then I have nothing to do but to refer you to your own standard of faith. The church to which you belong, and whose *Confession of Faith* I presume you subscribed, places this matter precisely upon the same ground that we do. No covenant title, says the *Presbyterian Confession of Faith*, but in the church—no admission into the church but by baptism—no baptism but by a lawful minister—and no lawful minister but by the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery.* So says Dr. *Mason* also. “Her,” the church’s, “ministry enters into her very being. Had

* Chap. 25, 27, 28.

the ministry ever been destroyed, the church would have been destroyed too.”* So says a man whom you highly reverence, *John Calvin*. “Neither the light, nor heat of the sun, nor meat, nor drink, are so necessary to nourish and sustain the present life, as the office of the Apostles and Pastors is necessary to preserve the church.”† And yet, Sir, in opposition to your great exemplar, *Calvin*, your ingenious coadjutor, *Dr. Mason*, your own confession of faith, which, I presume, you think yourself bound to maintain, and, what is worse, to the holy scriptures, (which I shall prove presently) you consider the ministry a mere mutable, external thing, not at all necessary to its existence.

“Baptism,” says your platform of faith,‡ “is the seal of the covenant of grace.” Baptism is essential to church membership. So says the *confession*, and so say the scriptures. Now, baptism is an external. But *you* say, “It is certainly contrary to the genius of the gospel dispensation, to place forms of outward order among those things which are essential to the very existence of the church.” You must excuse me, Sir. Although I do not bow to every thing I find in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, yet, in this instance, I think it is perfectly correct. Upon *you*, however, that *Confession* has a claim of respect and submission.

* Christian's Magazine, p. 219.

† Inst. l. 4. c. 3.

‡ Cap. 26, 27, 28.

The truth, Sir, is, that what you have said upon this point, is equally opposed to the declarations of our church, of your own, and of the holy scriptures.

You have another assertion which is as little tenable as the foregoing.—You condemn us, Sir, for laying so much stress upon Episcopal order, and you very roundly tell us, that “it is placing a point of external order on a par with the essence of religion.”

Now, Sir, that you should not know that we place it precisely upon the same ground with your own confession of faith, is strange indeed. Need I observe, that your confession makes ordination by Presbyters essential to the ministry, and a ministry essential to the church; and you yourself tell us, that the validity of our orders arises from Presbyters joining their hands with the Bishop’s. We do not thank you for the compliment I can assure you; but that by the way. Well, Sir, whatever importance the *Westminster* divines attach to Presbyterian ordination, we attach to Episcopal, and not a tittle more. If we put our ordination upon a par with the essence of religion, so do they put theirs. But the truth is, that neither of us puts it on that footing. The doctrine of both churches is perfectly the same, and perfectly correct. Both make a ministry essential to a visible church, and the visible church, with all its ordinances, a mean, by divine institution, of promoting that purity and piety of heart, which are essential to the enjoyment of God in his hea-

venly kingdom. Now, Sir, can you suppose, that both your church and ours, are so preposterous as to put the *means* upon a par with the *end*—the church *militant* upon a par with the church *triumphant*—the *ministry* upon a par with the *end* of the ministry—the *messenger* upon a par with the *message*—the *sacraments* upon a par with the *grace* conveyed by them? It is strange that you should suppose it; yet it seems to be the case. But, on the other hand, is it not wild fanaticism to suppose, that the end is to be attained, in an ordinary way, without the means? Is it not daring presumption to separate what God hath joined together? Christ has commanded us to be baptized, and baptism is made every where in scripture, essential to church membership? Oh no, say you, a point of external order cannot be at all essential to church membership, for that would be making externals essential to the existence of a church, and putting them upon a par with the essence of religion. Well, Sir, we *do* make some externals essential to the being of a church. So do *you*; so does your *Confession of Faith*, so do the holy scriptures: All make a ministry essential to a Christian church. But does any Episcopalian, or Presbyterian, or any confession of faith, or the holy scriptures, put the means upon a par with the end? Certainly not. A ministry and ordinances are essential to the being of a church; but the ministry, the ordinances, the church, are only the means which Christ has instituted to promote

the most important of all possible ends—the salvation of mankind. But it is miserable logic to infer from the importance we attach to the ministry and the ordinances, that our church, and yours, and the holy scriptures, put the means upon a par with the end. How a man of your intellect could have run into so gross an error, is beyond my comprehension.

In truth, Sir, I do not know what to make of you upon the subject of the church. One while, you make a ministry and ordinances essential to the being of a visible church—at another time, faith and holiness make us true members of the visible church. At one time, the former are of the utmost importance—at another, they are not essential to a church, and those who make them so are bigots; putting circumstantials upon a footing with essentials, the means upon a par with the end. Thus, page 344, you say, “Wherever the unfeigned love of our divine Saviour, an humble reliance on his atoning sacrifice, and a corresponding holiness of life pervade any denomination of Christians, we hail them as brethren in Christ; we acknowledge them to be a true church; and although we may observe and lament imperfections in their outward government, we consider them as truly in covenant with the King of Zion as ourselves.”

This passage evidently means, that if we have but faith in Christ, and love for him, we are in *visible* covenant with him, although we belong to no church possessing a ministry, and, conse-

quently, have no sacraments nor covenanting rites. This directly contradicts the scriptures, the Presbyterian confession of faith, your own assertions, and the declarations of your sensible coadjutors, Dr. *Mason* and Mr. *M'Leod*.

1. You contradict the scriptures. They make the Christian church a visible society, partaking of visible ordinances, administered by a visible ministry. *Your* church consists of men possessing invisible graces—faith in Christ, and love for him.

The scriptures make the visible church to consist of good and bad members, as appears from the similitude of a net cast into the sea, which takes both good and bad fish; and of a marriage feast, which receives both good and bad guests. But *your* church consists altogether of the good.

The scriptures make a ministry essential to a visible church, as appears from Christ's instituting a ministry to conduct all the affairs of his spiritual kingdom. But *your* church requires no ministry.

Your church is different from Christ's; inasmuch as he makes baptism essential to an admission into *his* church. *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved. Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We are all baptized into one body,* says the Apostle *Paul*—into one visible body, or one visible church.

If your account of the church of Christ upon earth be true, then the least that can be said is, that

he has two visible churches upon earth, one of which consists altogether of good people, the other of both good and bad. But, according to the scriptures, there is but one church upon earth, and, accordingly, but one hope of our calling—the hope of seeing God in glory; one faith in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and one baptism, by which we are made members of this one church.

If all who profess faith in Christ, and love for him, are members of him, it was needless for *St. Peter*, when the Jews inquired of him, *What shall we do?* to say to them—*Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.* It was needless for the same Apostle to ask, in the case of *Cornelius* and his household—*Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. It was needless for *Paul*, after he professed faith in Christ, and received the Holy Ghost, to be baptized. But we find that he *was* baptized. He *arose*, says the text, *and was baptized.*

In short, the New Testament makes visible ordinances, and a visible ministry, essential to Christ's church militant upon earth.

2. You are also completely at warfare with your own *Confession of Faith*. The ministry and the sacraments, says that confession,* are essential to

* Chap. xxv. 3. xxvii. 4. xxviii. 1.

the church. But your church is very different from the Presbyterian church. *Yours* makes faith in Christ, and love for him, all that are essential to a Christian church.

3. You are at complete warfare with yourself. You say, p. 342, "The Christian ministry and ordinances were given to edify the body of Christ, and are the great instruments which God does, in fact, employ for this purpose." Consequently, they are essential to a Christian church; for what God appoints can never be indifferent.

Again you say, in the same page, "We contend, that there is, and must ever be, more virtue and holiness in the church of Christ, than out of it. We contend, in short, that in that household of God, to which his gracious promises, and his life-giving spirit are vouchsafed, while we shall always find much corruption, we must expect to find, in general, much more of the life and power of religion, than among those who have no connection with that household."

Here, Sir, you talk like a Bible Christian. You make the church of Christ to consist both of good and bad members; for, you say, there is in it "much corruption." You also call the church "the household of God," which, of course, makes it a visible society. And you say, that to this "household, God's gracious promises, and life-giving spirit are vouchsafed." Consequently, those who are out of this household, out of this visible society, are not

entitled to these promises, and to God's life-giving spirit. Is not this saying decisively, that faith will not make a man a member of Christ's visible church?

Again you say, p. 8. "We agree with our Episcopal brethren in believing, that Christ hath appointed officers in his church to preach the word, to administer sacraments, to dispense discipline, and to commit these powers to other faithful men." What Christ has instituted in his church as means of salvation, must be essential to his church, and an angel from heaven has no power to abrogate them. Thus, *your church* and *Christ's* are utterly irreconcilable; and thus also you are proved to be at complete warfare with yourself.

4. You are in direct opposition to your *coadjutor* Dr. *Mason*. He has been already quoted, saying—"Her," the church's "ministry enters into her very being." Can there be any church then without a ministry? Can those who have faith and love, although united together upon sound doctrinal principles, be a church without a ministry? Can they be initiated into the church without a ministry? Not if Dr. *Mason* be right; and I am well satisfied that he is. There can be no church membership without baptism—no baptism without a ministry, and, consequently, no church without both. So that it is impossible for a man, according to the Doctor, let his faith be ever so strong, and his love ever so ardent, to be a member of Christ's visible church without a ministry, and without baptism.

You are also, Sir, completely at variance with Mr. *M-Leod*. He asserts, *Catechism*, p. 99, "We are not to receive a man to communion, merely because he is regenerate; nor are we to reject him, merely because he is unregenerate.

" 1. We are not officers of the invisible church. Saintship is, in it, the criterion of membership.

" 2. It is impossible that regeneration is the criterion of membership in the visible church: no mere man can judge the heart. Upon this principle, we never could associate in the church with confidence. We cannot be certain of one another's regeneration.

" 3. It is presumption to say, that saintship is the criterion of visible membership. It condemns the conduct of Christ, and of the Apostles. Christ admitted as a member, and ordained as a minister, *Judas*, whom he knew to be unregenerate. *Simon* the sorcerer was a baptized, church member, while in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity.

" 4. By a divine constitution, the church of the Jews included some unregenerate men.

" 5. The Christian visible church, according to Christ's account of it, embraces some unregenerate men.

" Is it a vine? It has barren branches. Is it a field of growing corn? The tares must grow with the wheat until the harvest. These tares are the children of the wicked one. This is not to be denied.

" 6. The principle, that regeneration is the criterion of membership, is pregnant with mischief. 1.

It encourages ignorance in ministers. 2. It is an engine of tyranny. 3. It encourages spiritual pride. 4. It is destructive to piety. 5. It encourages licentiousness. 6. It is a certain method of banishing saints from the church, and of receiving hypocrites."

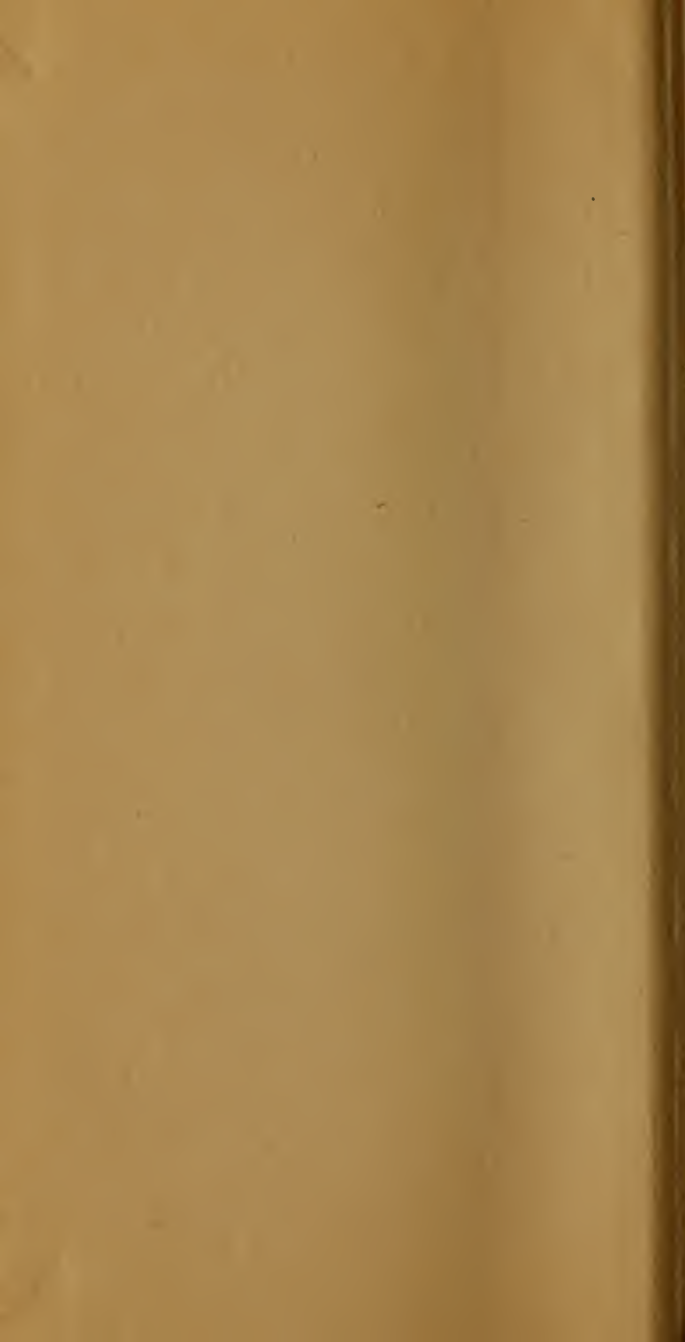
Thus, Sir, I have completely proved that you are at variance with Mr. *M'Leod*, with Dr. *Mason*, with yourself, with the *Presbyterian Confession of Faith*, and with the holy scriptures. And yet, Sir, you have written a book to give your *Christian brethren* a true notion of the nature and constitution of the Christian church.

It really, Sir, would be an endless business to attend to all the surmises, inconsistencies, and positive, unfounded assertions contained in your *Letters*. I shall, therefore, decline the unpleasant task, and proceed to a point of some importance—your view of the principles of the reformers of the *church of England*. This will afford us a curious specimen of assertion without proof, and of misrepresentation without plausibility.

END OF VOLUME I.

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